



SKYBOUND

1

# THE WALKING DEAD



ROBERT KIRKMAN  
TONY MOORE  
DAVE STEWART

10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS

# THE WALKING DEAD™

**ROBERT KIRKMAN**

Creator, Writer, Letterer

**TONY MOORE**

Penciler, Inker

**DAVE STEWART**

Colors

**SEAN MACKIEWICZ**

Editor

For Skybound  
Entertainment



**Robert Kirkman**  
chief executive officer

**J.J. Didde**  
president

**Sean Mackiewicz**  
editorial director

**Shawn Kirkham**  
director of business development

**Brian Huntington**  
online editorial director

**Helen Leigh**  
office manager

**Lizzy Iverson**  
administrative assistant

for International Rights inquiries,  
please contact [foreign@skybound.com](mailto:foreign@skybound.com)

[www.skybound.com](http://www.skybound.com)

For Image Comics



**Robert Kirkman**  
chief operating officer

**Erik Larsen**  
chief financial officer

**Todd McFarlane**  
president

**Marc Silvestri**  
chief executive officer

**Jim Valentino**  
vice-president

**Eric Stephenson**  
publisher

**Ron Richards**  
director of business development

**Jennifer de Guzman**  
pr & marketing director

**Branwyn Bigglestone**  
accounts manager

**Emily Miller**  
accounting assistant

**Jamie Parreno**  
marketing assistant

**Emilio Bautista**  
sales assistant

**Jaemie Dudas**  
administrative assistant

**Kevin Yuen**  
digital rights coordinator

**Tyler Shainline**  
events coordinator

**David Brothers**  
content manager

**Jonathan Chan**  
production manager

**Drew Gill**  
art director

**Jana Cook**  
print manager

**Monica Garcia**  
senior production artist

**Vincent Kukua**  
production artist

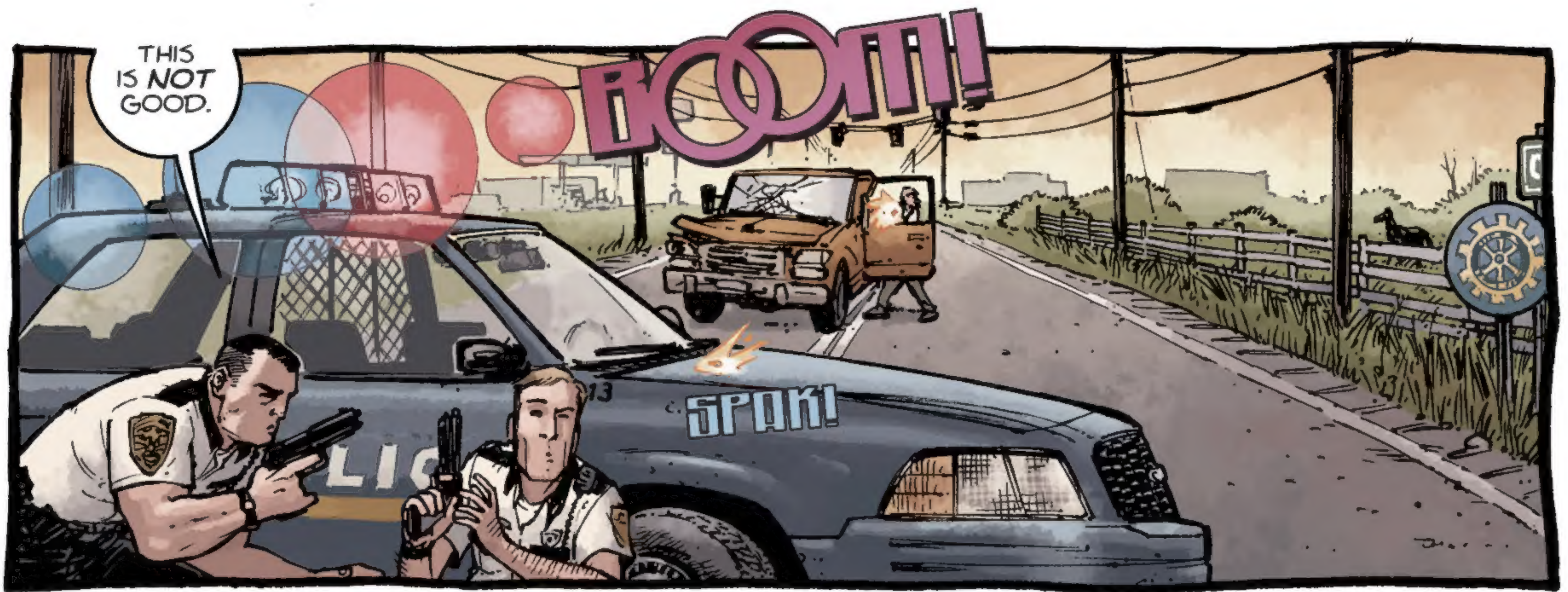
**Jenna Savage**  
production artist

**Addison Duke**  
production artist

[www.imagecomics.com](http://www.imagecomics.com)

THE WALKING DEAD #1 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION. October 2013. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: 2001 Center St., 6th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704. Copyright © 2013 Robert Kirkman, LLC. All rights reserved. THE WALKING DEAD™ (including all prominent characters featured herein), its logo and all character likenesses are trademarks of Robert Kirkman, LLC, unless otherwise noted. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks and copyrights of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for review purposes) without the express written permission of Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living and/or dead), events or places, without satiric intent, is coincidental. DIGITAL EDITION.









GASP!

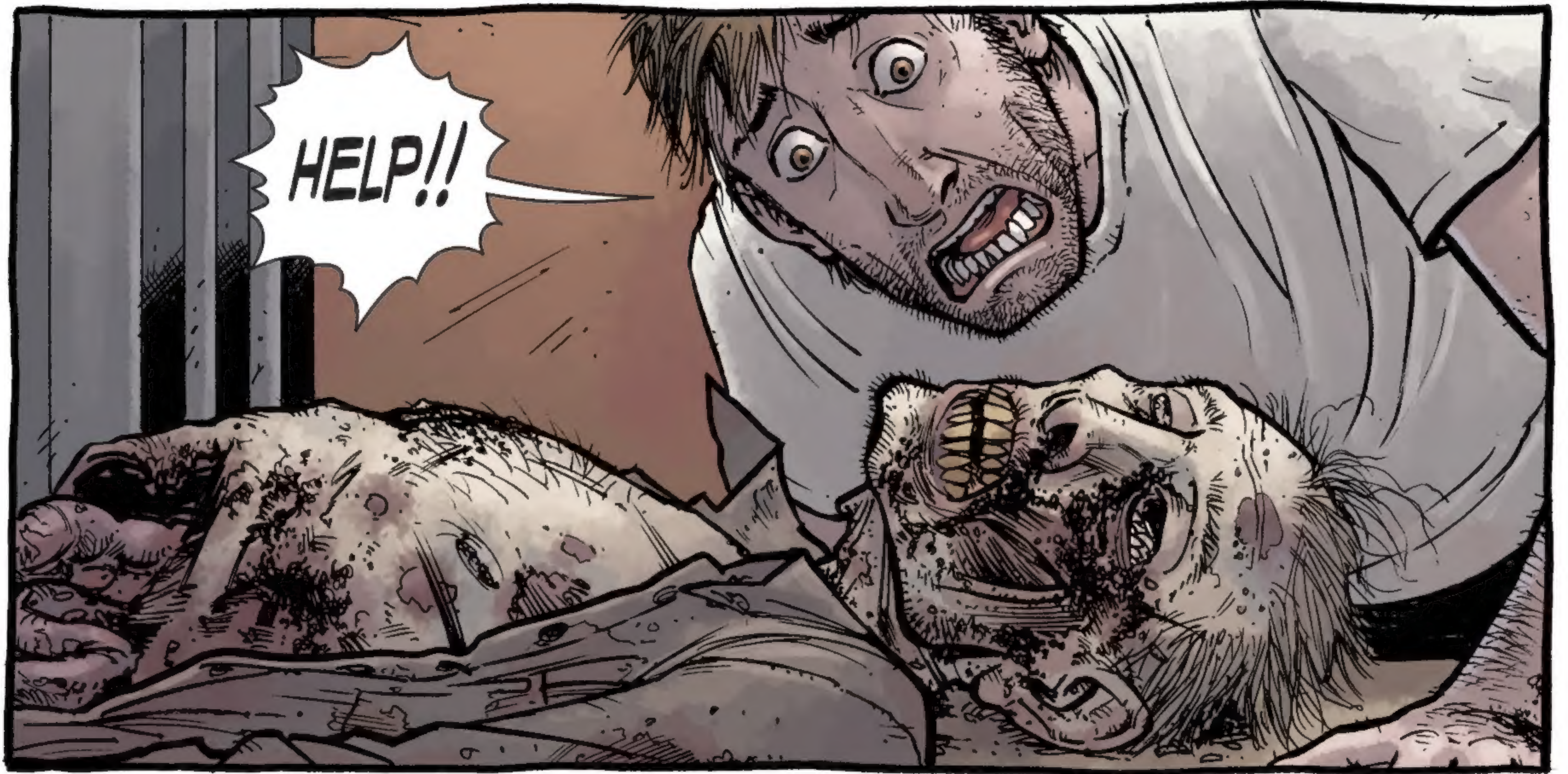














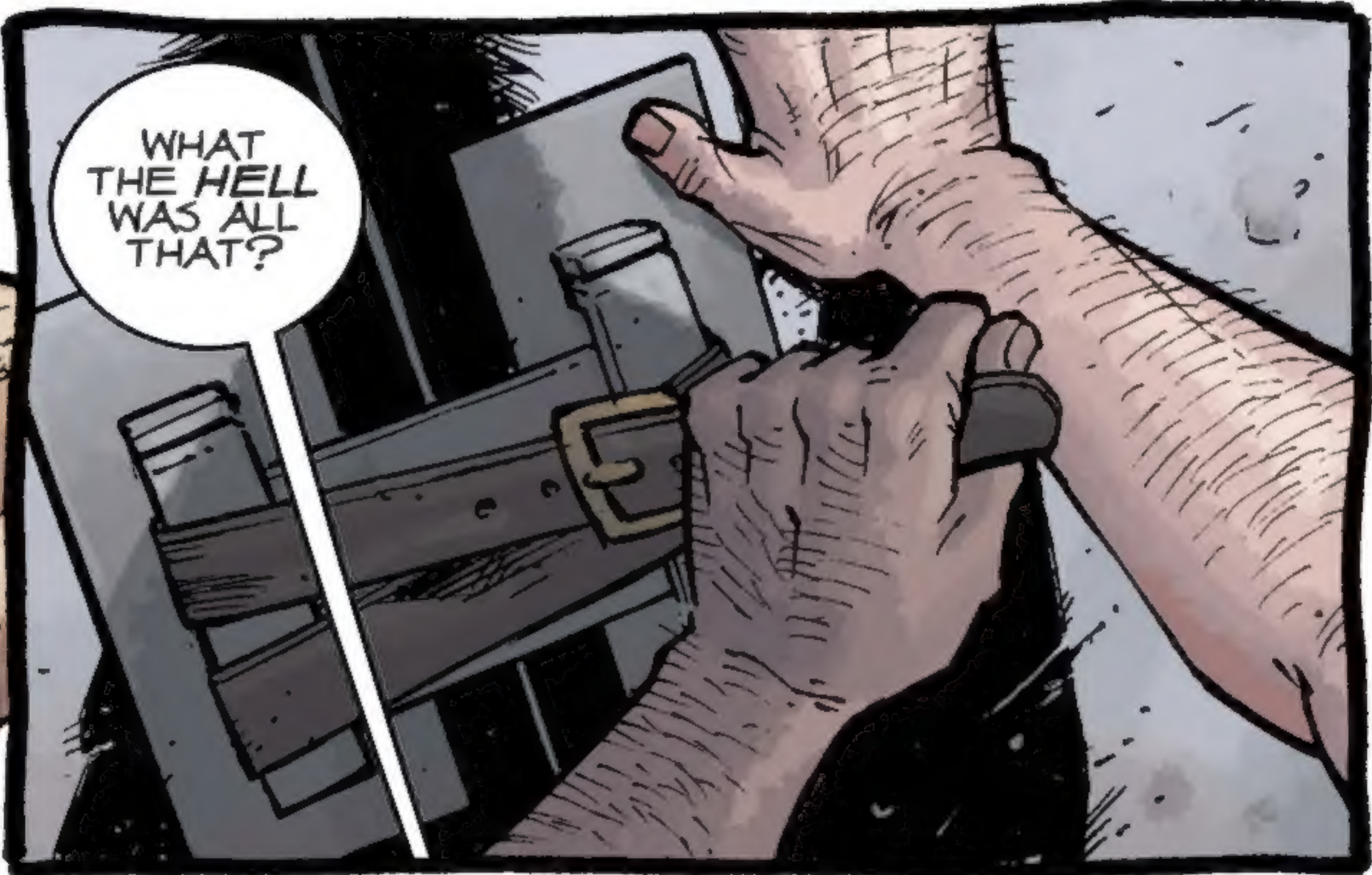


LUNGH.





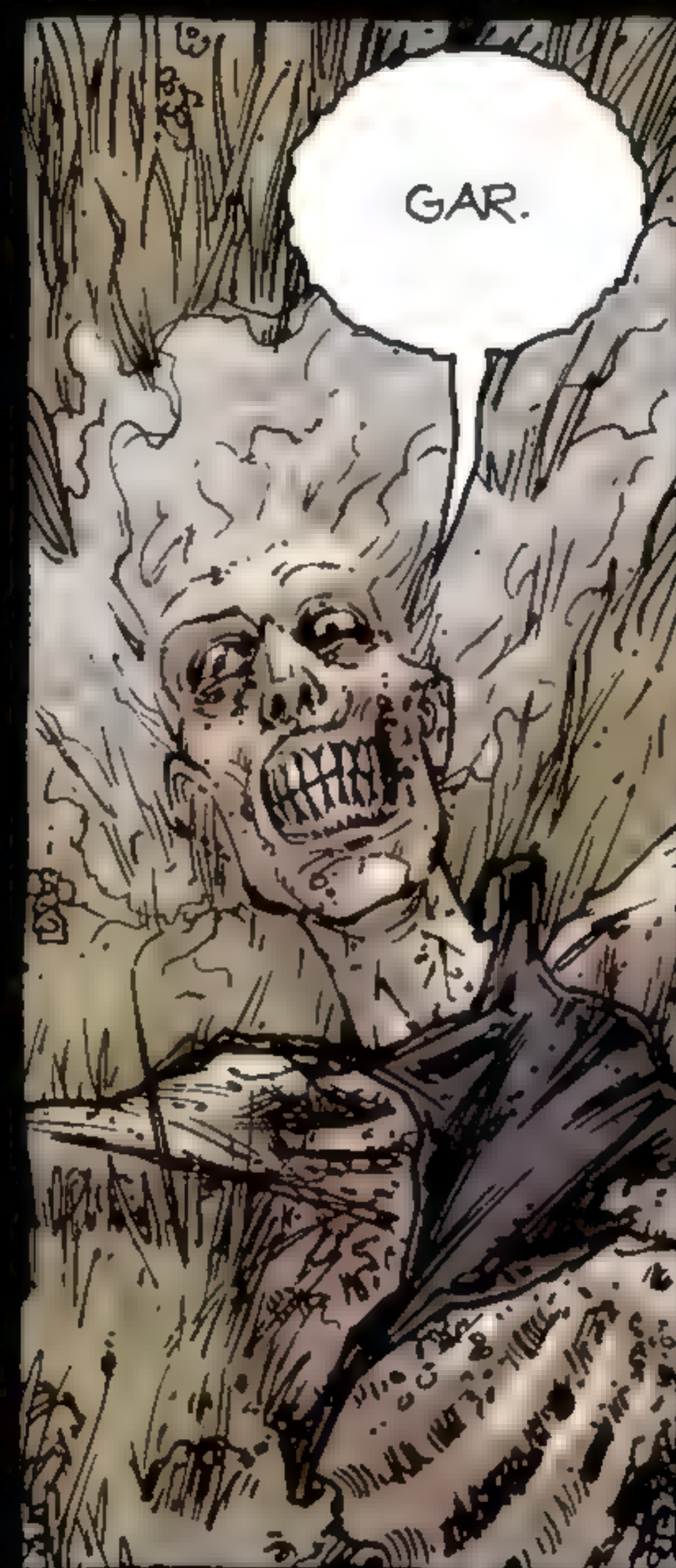
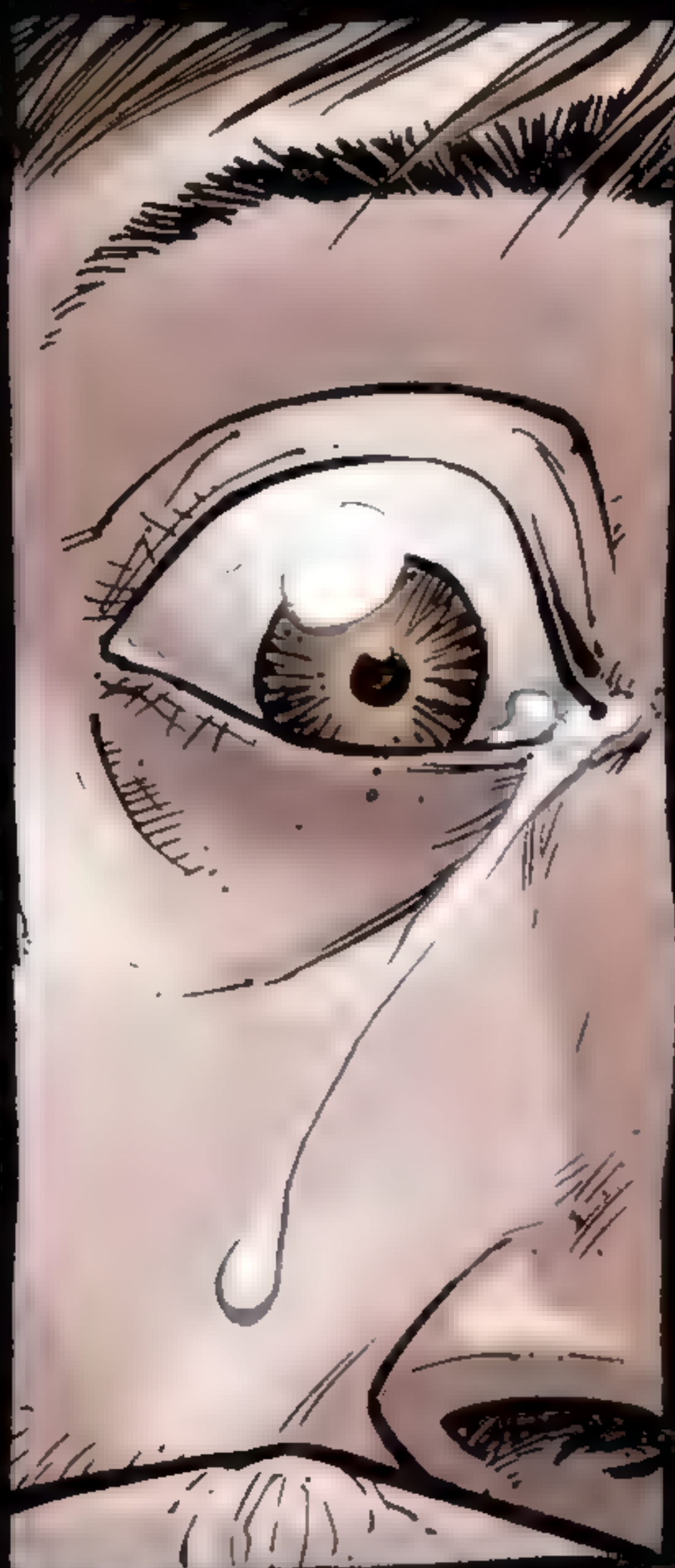
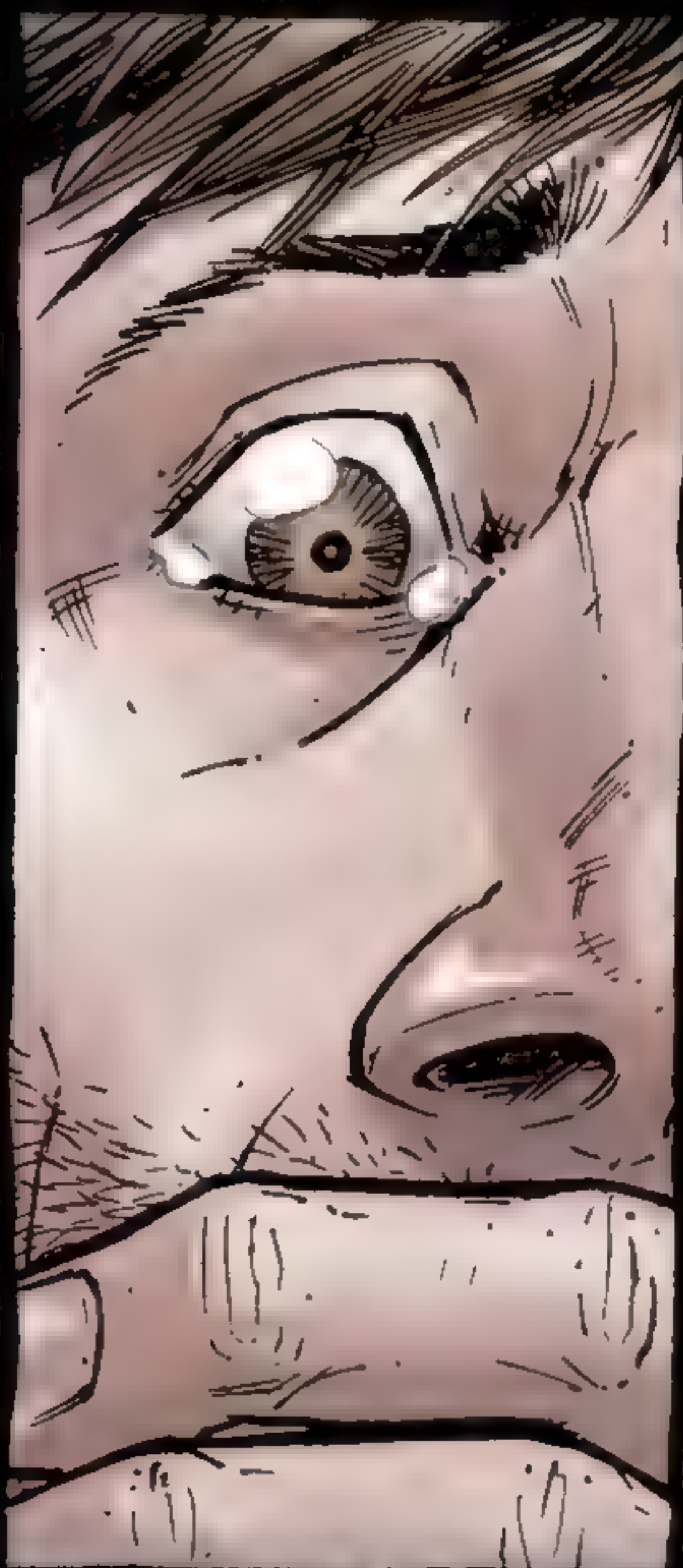




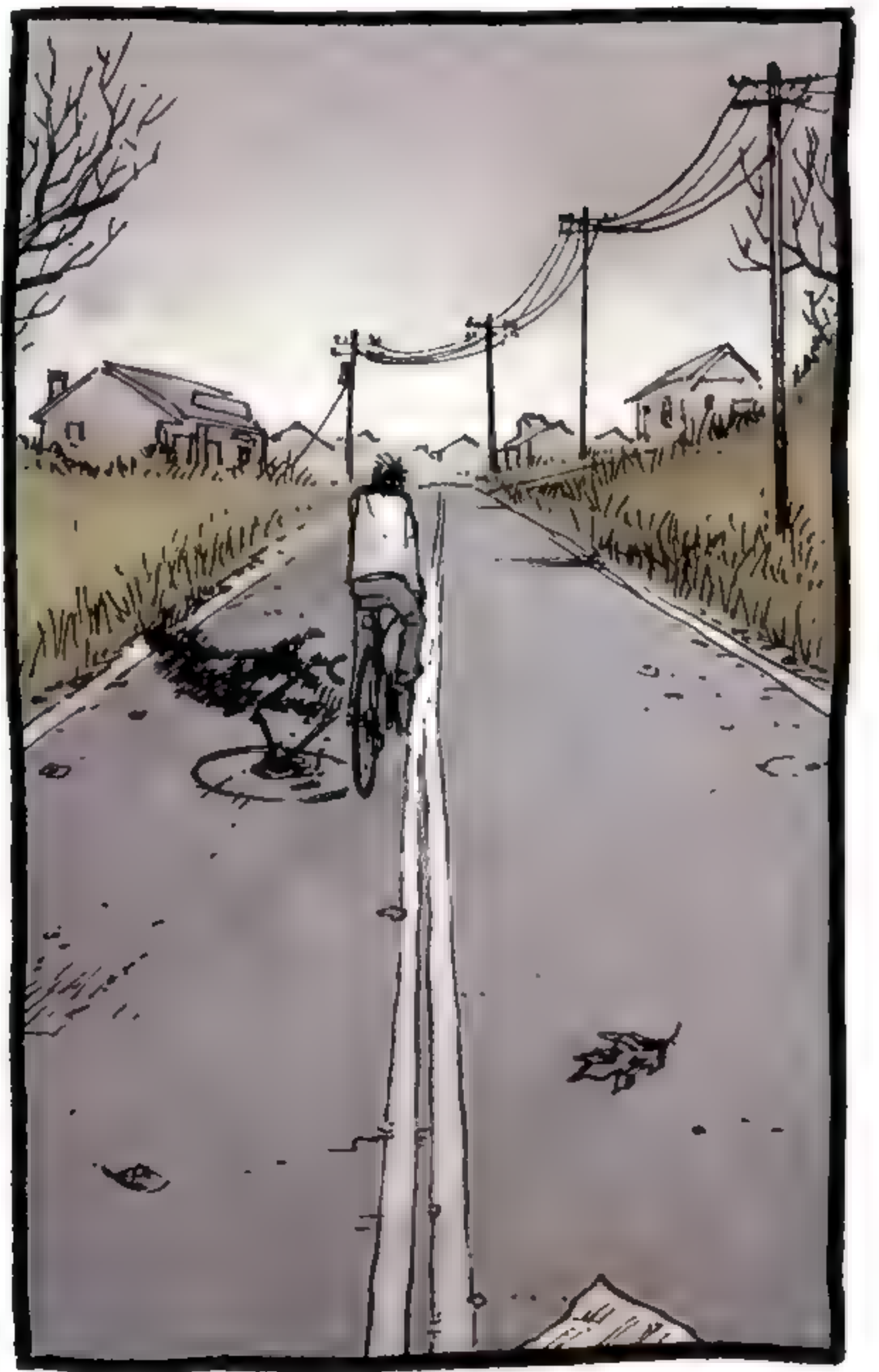




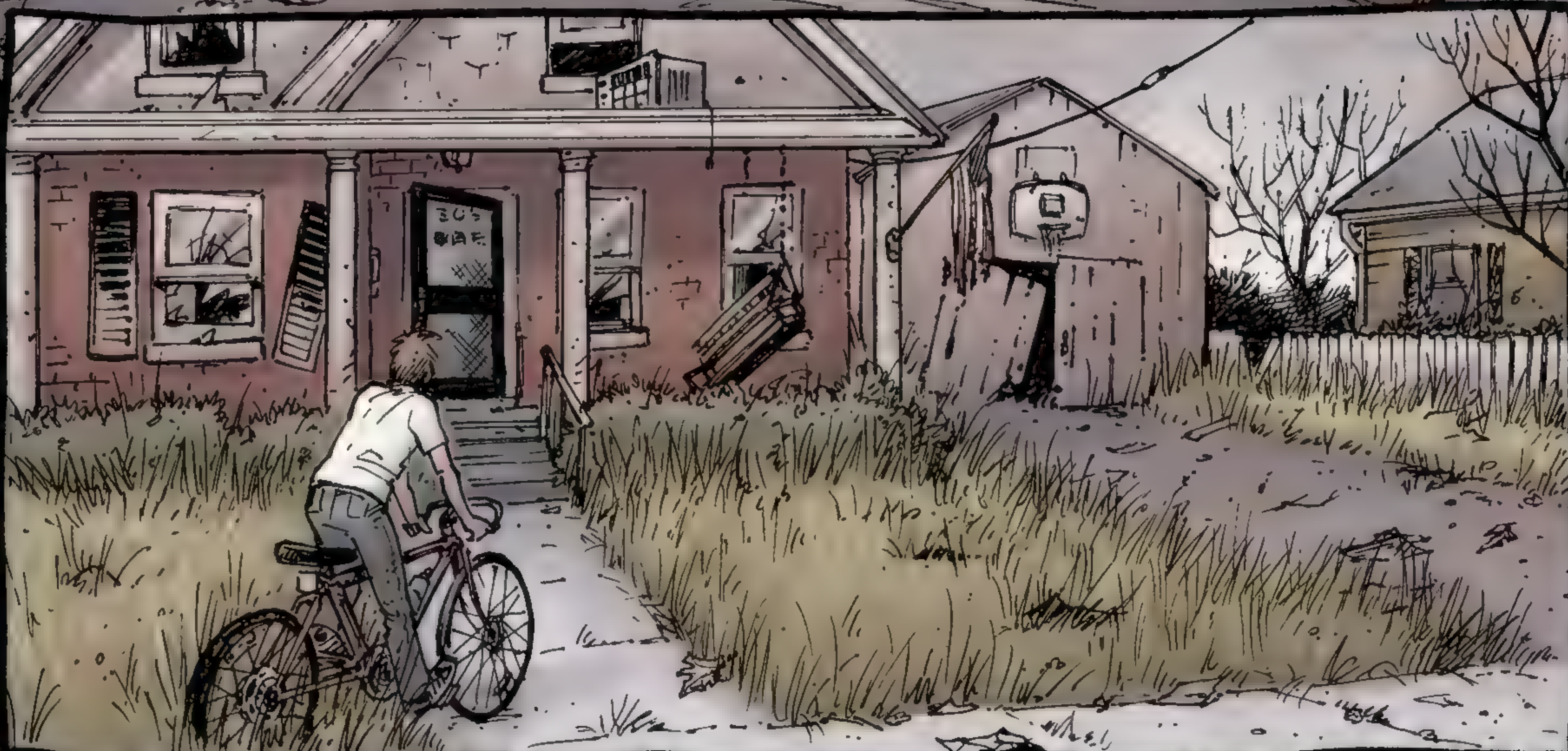




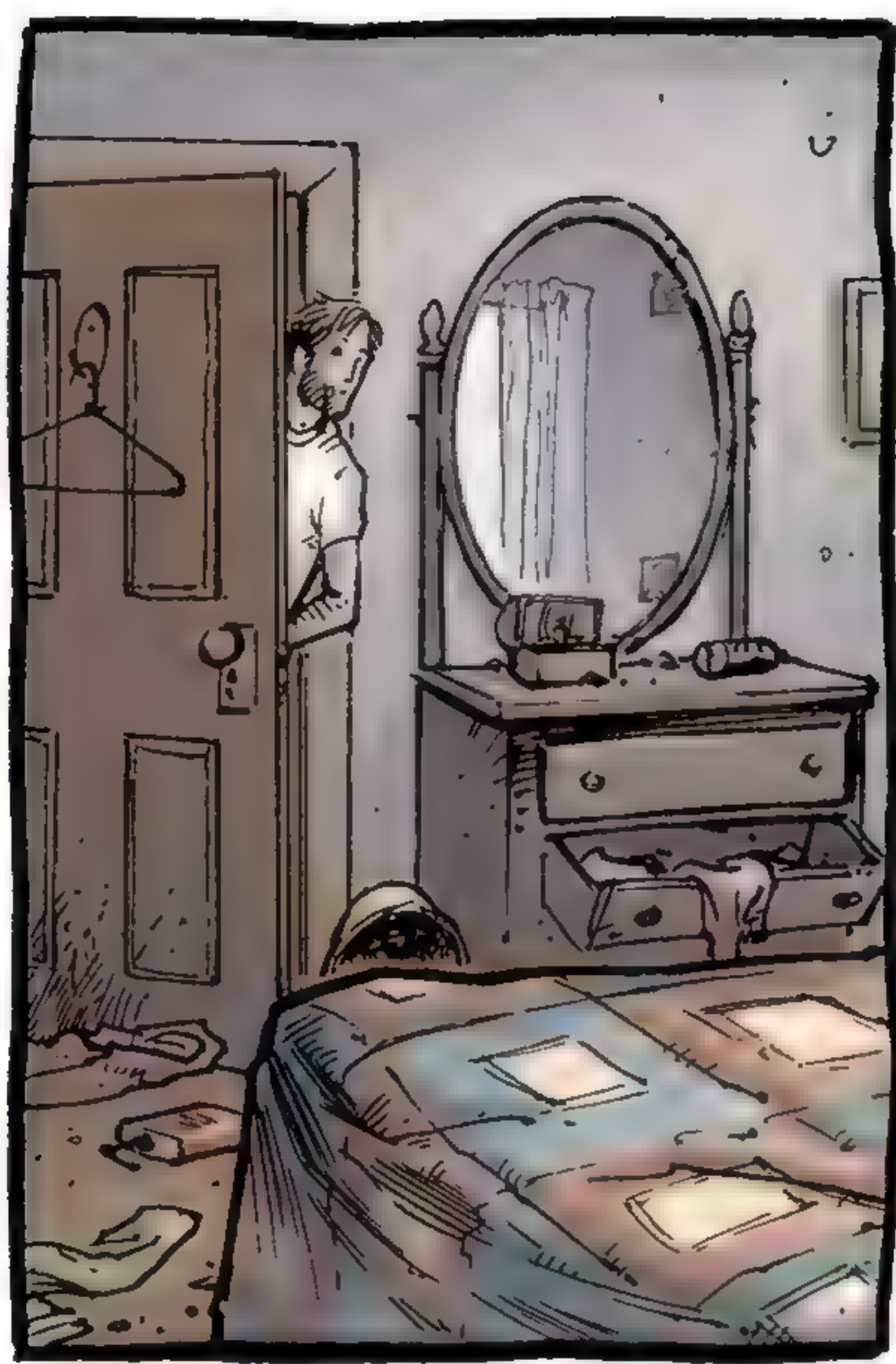








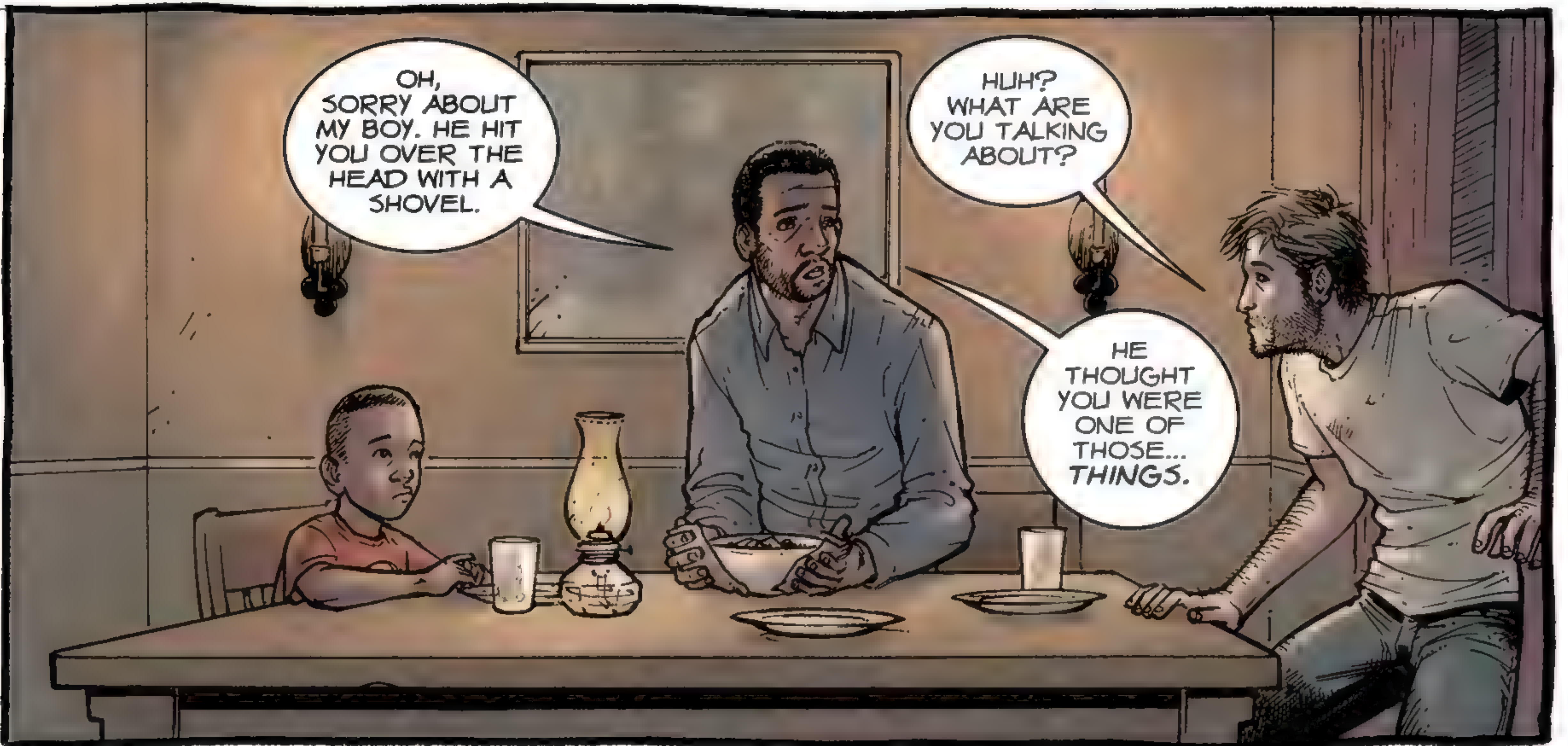




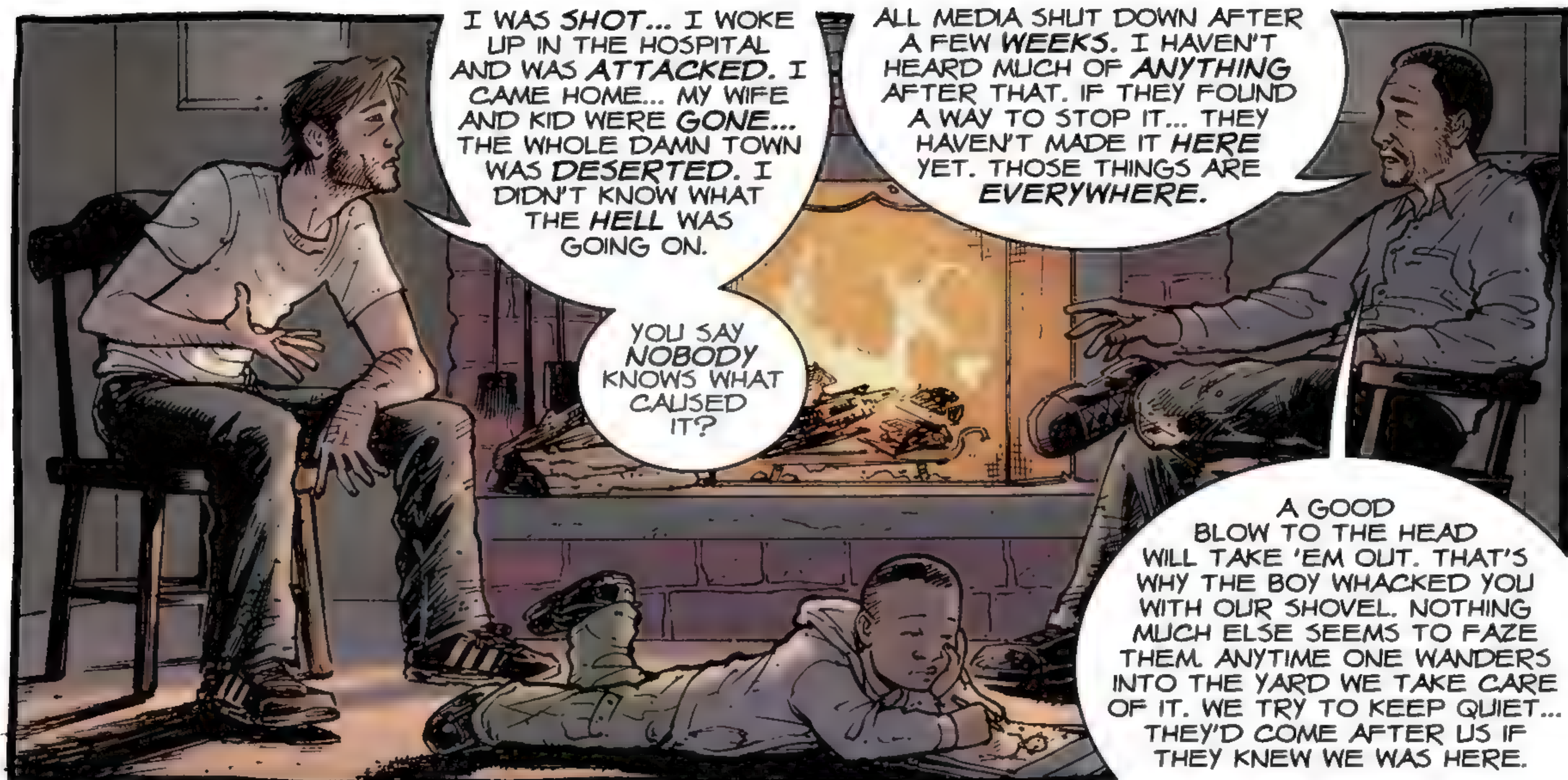












I WAS SHOT... I WOKE UP IN THE HOSPITAL AND WAS ATTACKED. I CAME HOME... MY WIFE AND KID WERE GONE... THE WHOLE DAMN TOWN WAS DESERTED. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL WAS GOING ON.

ALL MEDIA SHUT DOWN AFTER A FEW WEEKS. I HAVEN'T HEARD MUCH OF ANYTHING AFTER THAT. IF THEY FOUND A WAY TO STOP IT... THEY HAVEN'T MADE IT HERE YET. THOSE THINGS ARE EVERYWHERE.

YOU SAY NOBODY KNOWS WHAT CAUSED IT?

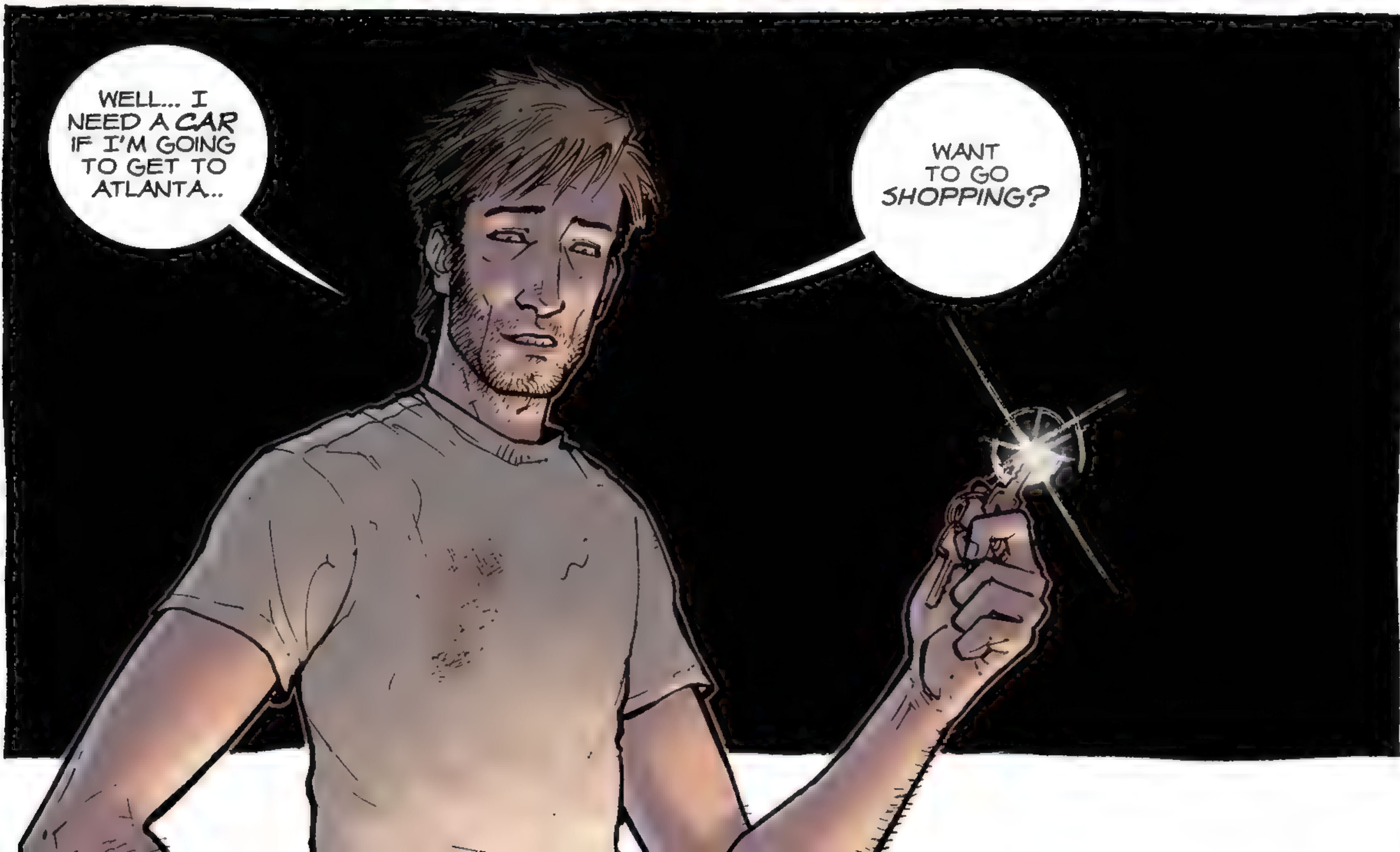
A GOOD BLOW TO THE HEAD WILL TAKE 'EM OUT. THAT'S WHY THE BOY WHACKED YOU WITH OUR SHOVEL. NOTHING MUCH ELSE SEEMS TO FAZE THEM. ANYTIME ONE WANDERS INTO THE YARD WE TAKE CARE OF IT. WE TRY TO KEEP QUIET... THEY'D COME AFTER US IF THEY KNEW WE WAS HERE.

BEFORE THEY STOPPED BROADCASTING THEY TOLD US TO RELOCATE TO THE BIGGER CITIES. THEY SAID THEY COULD PROTECT US ALL THERE. I FIGURED I'D BE BETTER OFF TAKING MY CHANCES HERE.

MY IN-LAWS LIVE IN ATLANTA.. THAT'S ONLY A FIVE HOUR DRIVE FROM HERE. THAT'S PROBABLY WHERE MY WIFE WENT.

THANK GOD... IF THEY'RE PROTECTING THE CITIES... MAN, I WAS SO WORRIED.

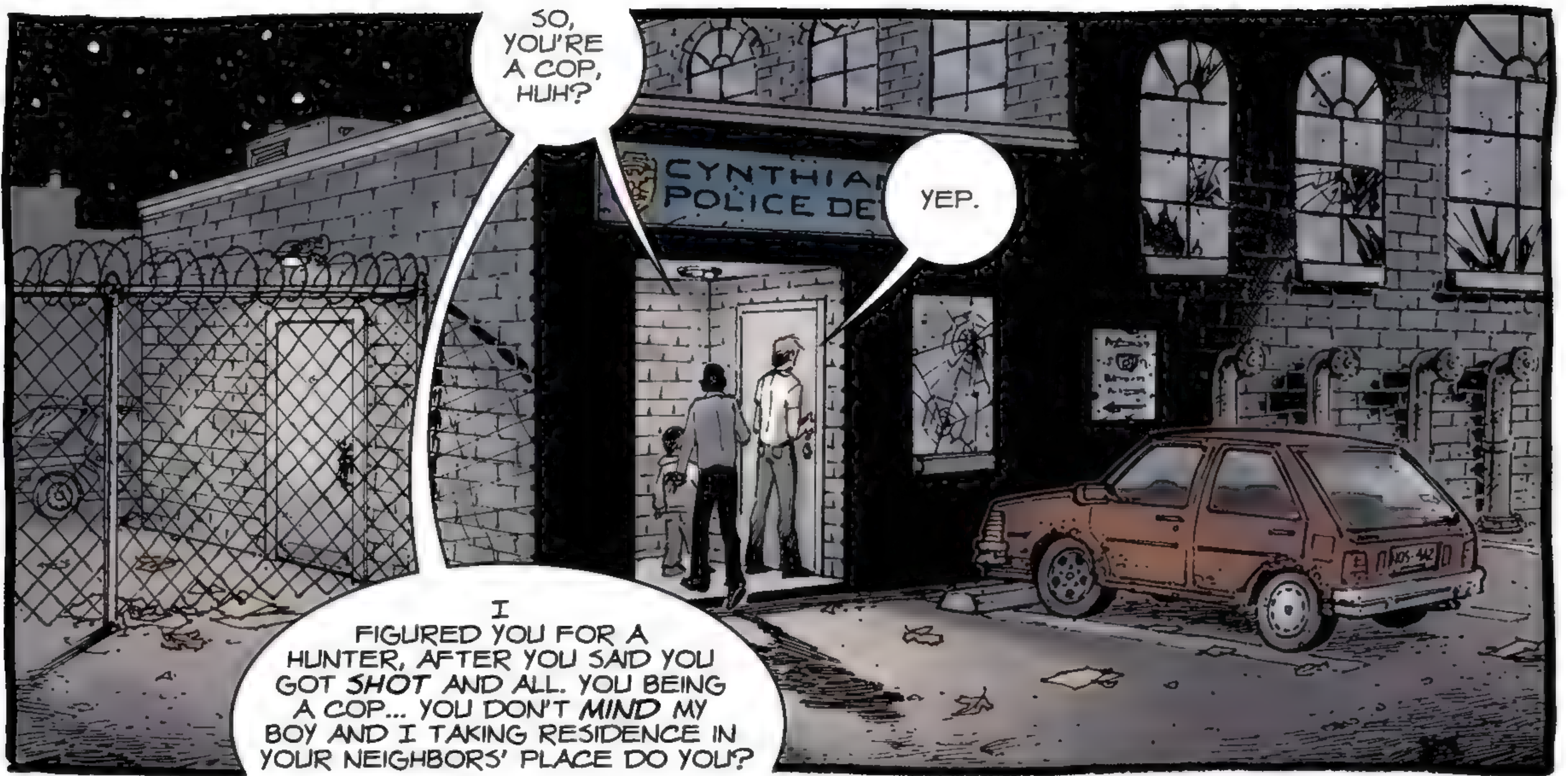
OH, YEAH... I'M SURE THEY'RE FINE.



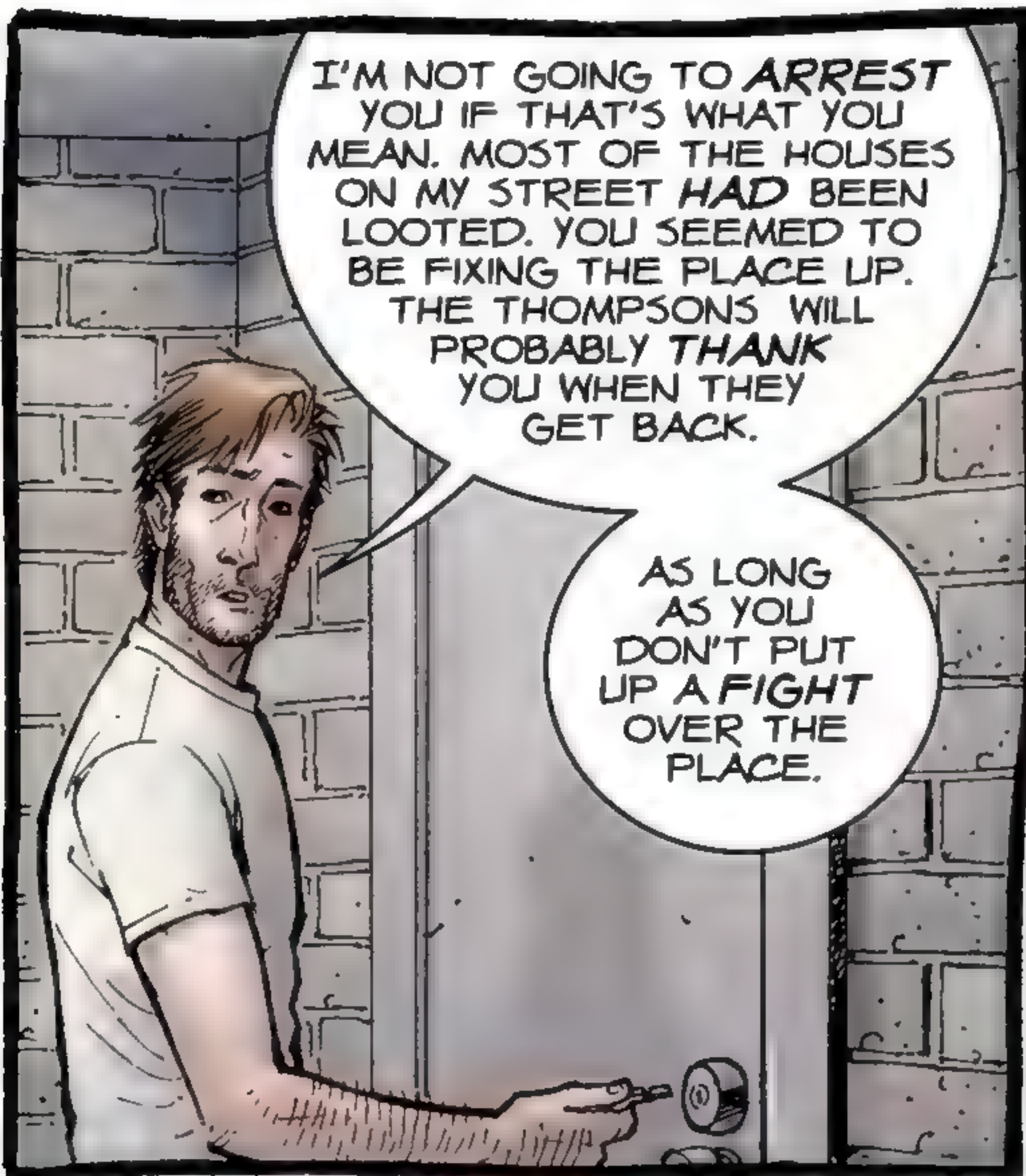
WELL... I NEED A CAR IF I'M GOING TO GET TO ATLANTA..

WANT TO GO SHOPPING?





I FIGURED YOU FOR A HUNTER, AFTER YOU SAID YOU GOT SHOT AND ALL. YOU BEING A COP... YOU DON'T MIND MY BOY AND I TAKING RESIDENCE IN YOUR NEIGHBORS' PLACE DO YOU?



I'M NOT GOING TO ARREST YOU IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN. MOST OF THE HOUSES ON MY STREET HAD BEEN LOOTED. YOU SEEMED TO BE FIXING THE PLACE UP. THE THOMPSONS WILL PROBABLY THANK YOU WHEN THEY GET BACK.

AS LONG AS YOU DON'T PUT UP A FIGHT OVER THE PLACE.



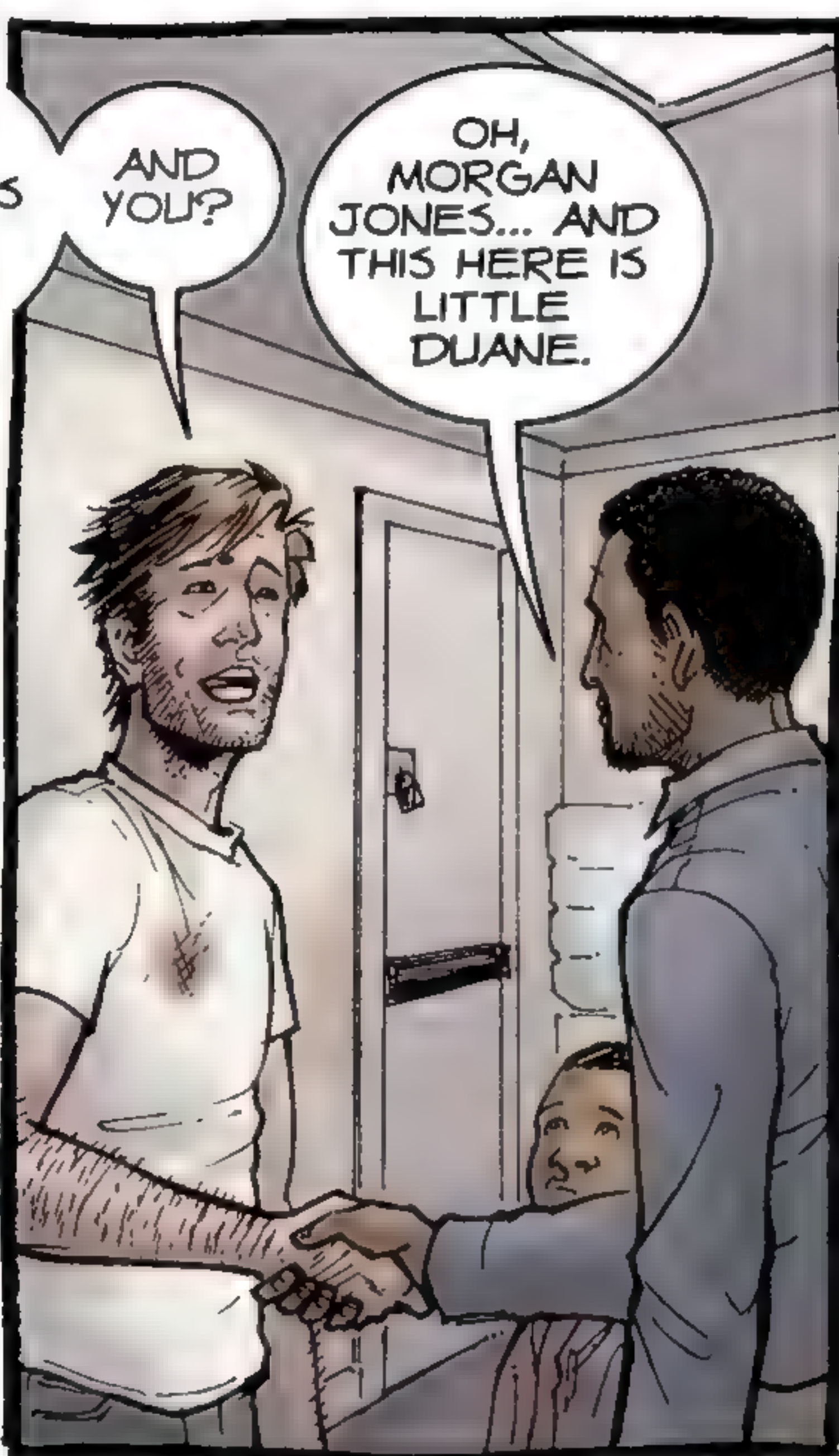
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE STEALING THE PLACE... YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD JUST SEEMED SAFER. WE DON'T FIGURE THAT WE'RE HURTING ANYBODY BY STAYING THERE... AND IN MY BOOK THAT MAKES IT OKAY.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO JUSTIFY ANYTHING TO ME. YOU'RE KEEPING YOUR SON SAFE. I'M WORRIED SICK ABOUT MINE. I UNDERSTAND.



I APPRECIATE THAT. Y'KNOW... I DON'T THINK I GOT YOUR NAME.

RICK... OFFICER RICK GRIMES AT YOUR SERVICE.



AND YOU?

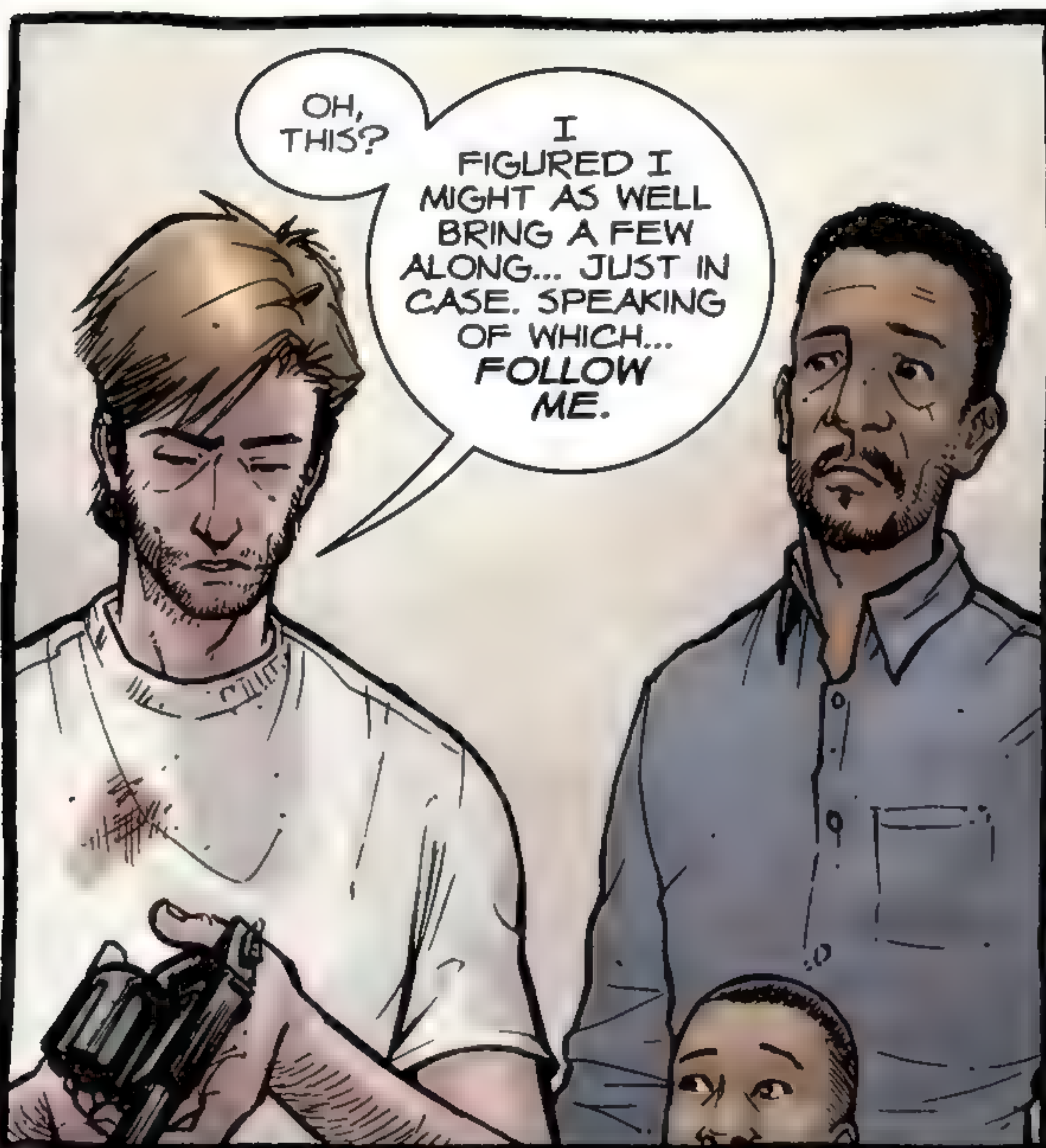
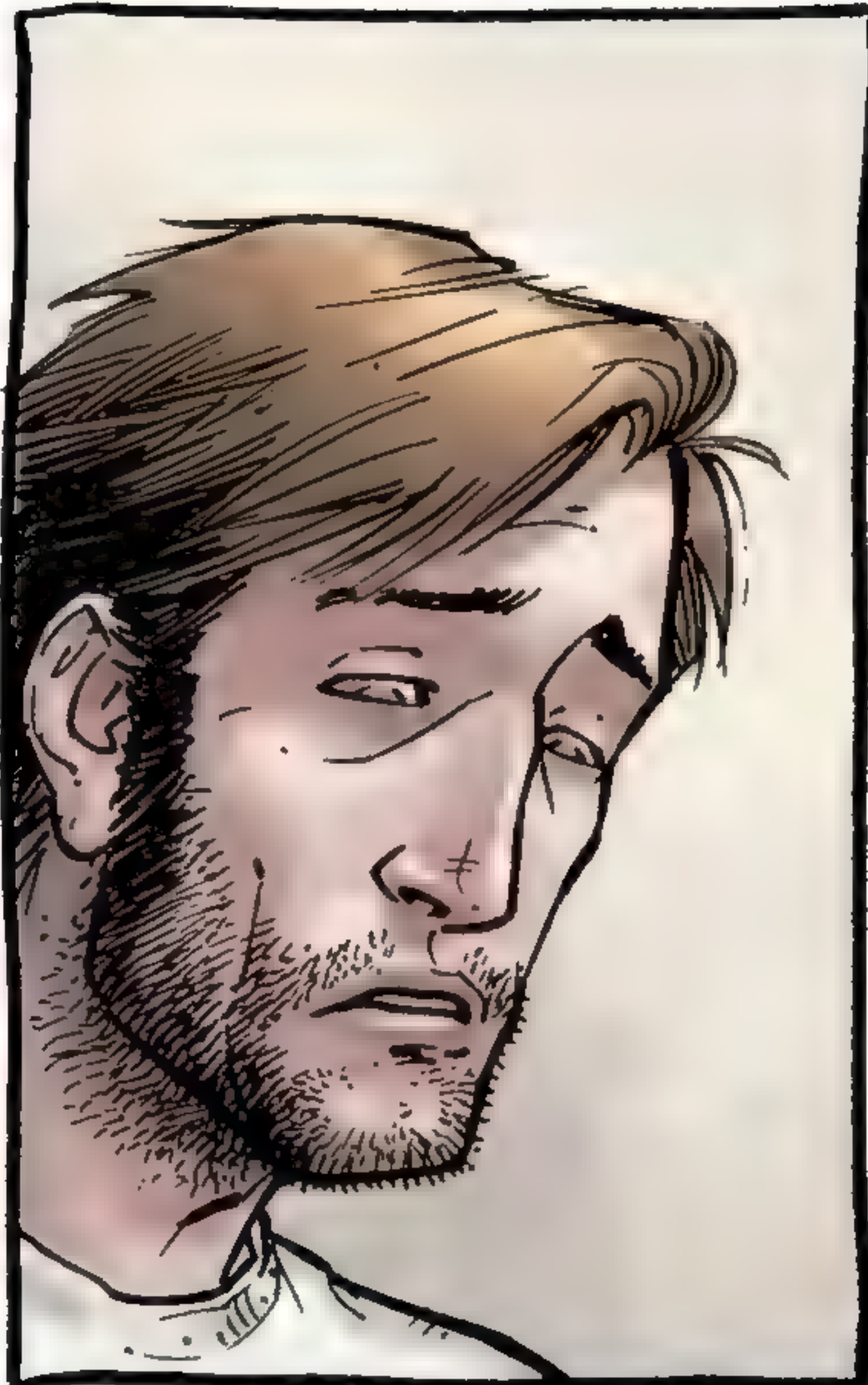
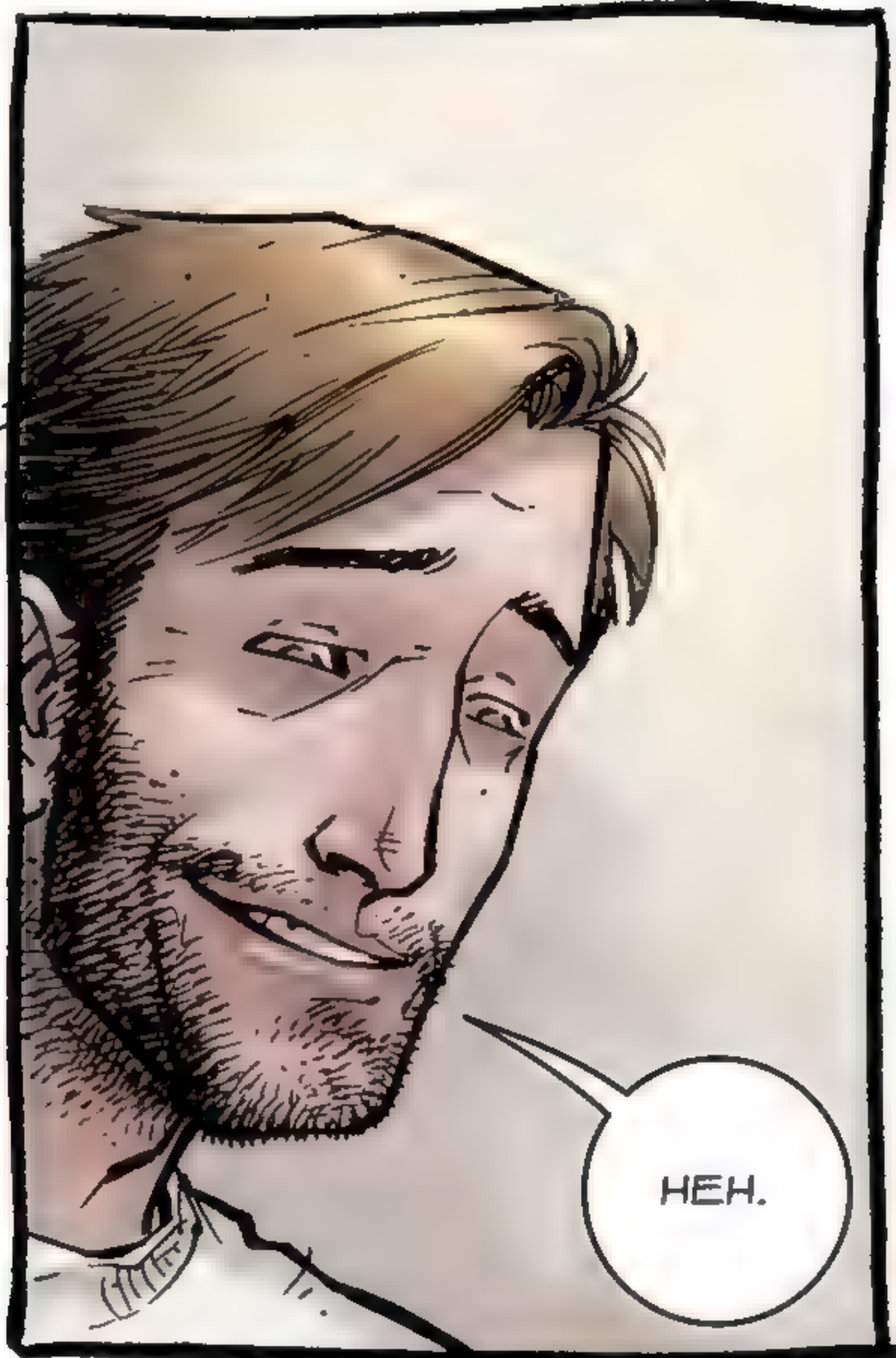
OH, MORGAN JONES... AND THIS HERE IS LITTLE DUANE.



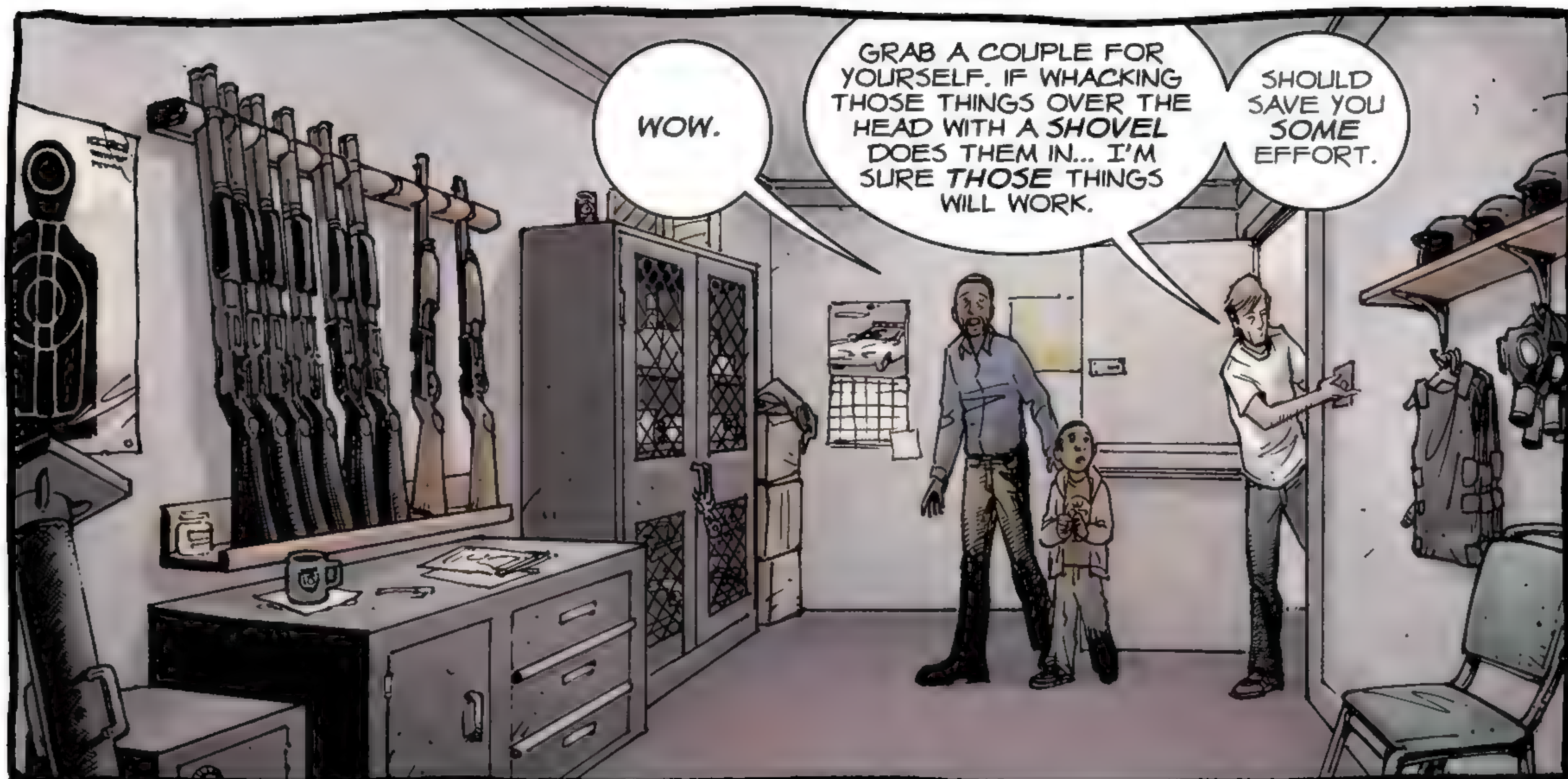
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, MORGAN. I REALLY APPRECIATE YOU DRIVING ME OVER HERE. YOU'VE HELPED ME OUT A LOT.

IT'S WORTH IT JUST TO GET TO TALK TO SOMEONE. IF IT AIN'T ABOUT CARTOONS OR PASSING GAS... MY BOY DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.









WOW.

GRAB A COUPLE FOR YOURSELF. IF WHACKING THOSE THINGS OVER THE HEAD WITH A **SHOVEL** DOES THEM IN... I'M SURE **THOSE THINGS** WILL WORK.

SHOULD SAVE YOU **SOME** EFFORT.



THE SHELLS ARE IN THE CABINET **BELOW** THE GUN RACK. MAKE SURE YOU SAVE SOME FOR **ME**. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.



CAN I--?

NO, **DAMMIT**. DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING.



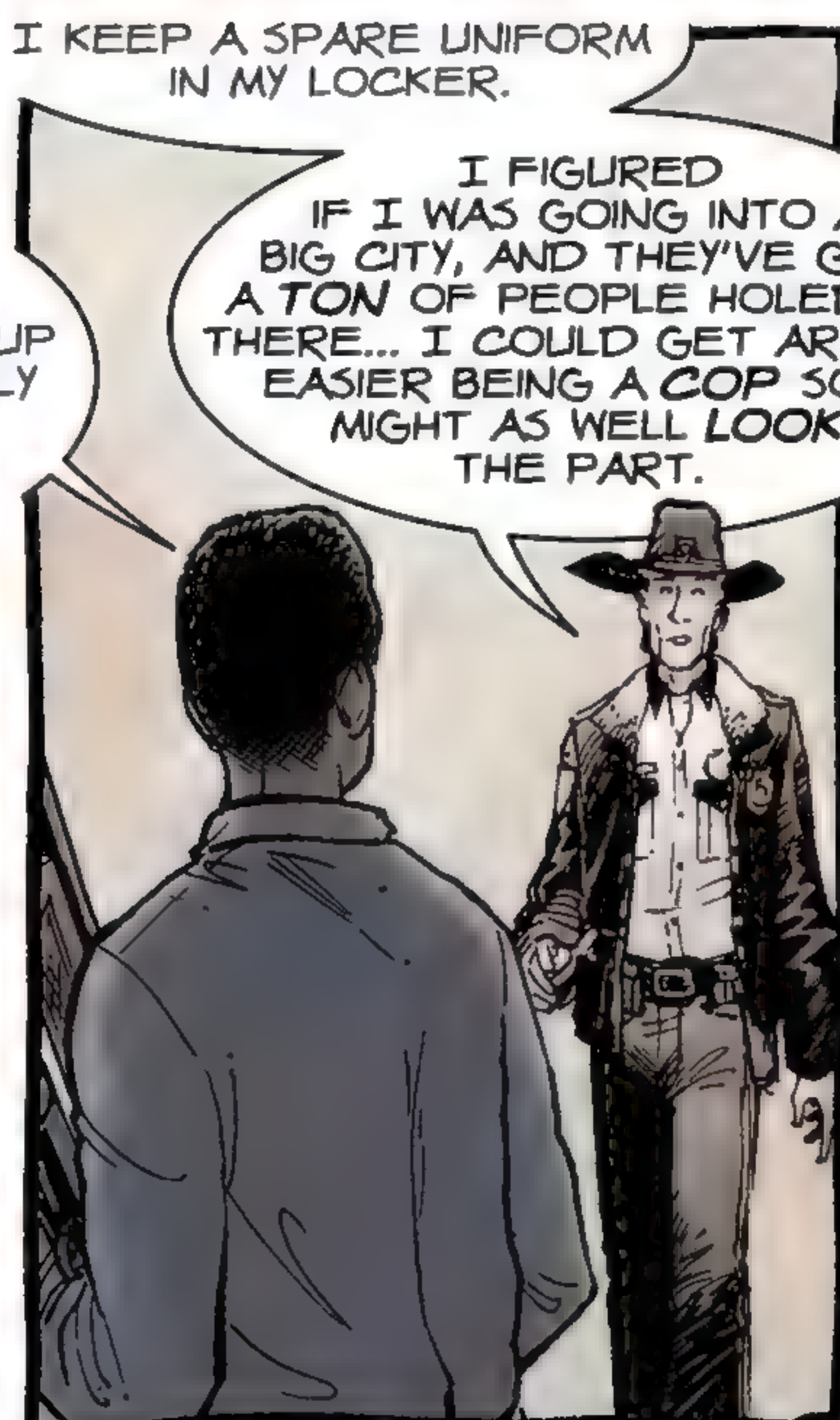
BUT I'M OLD ENOUGH.

YES, YOU ARE... AND I'M GONNA **TEACH** YOU HOW TO USE ONE OF THEM TOMORROW... BUT UNTIL THEN THEY'RE OFF **LIMITS**.



ARE THERE ENOUGH SHELLS FOR **BOTH** OF US IN THERE?

WELL... THAT GETUP CERTAINLY **SUITS** YOU.



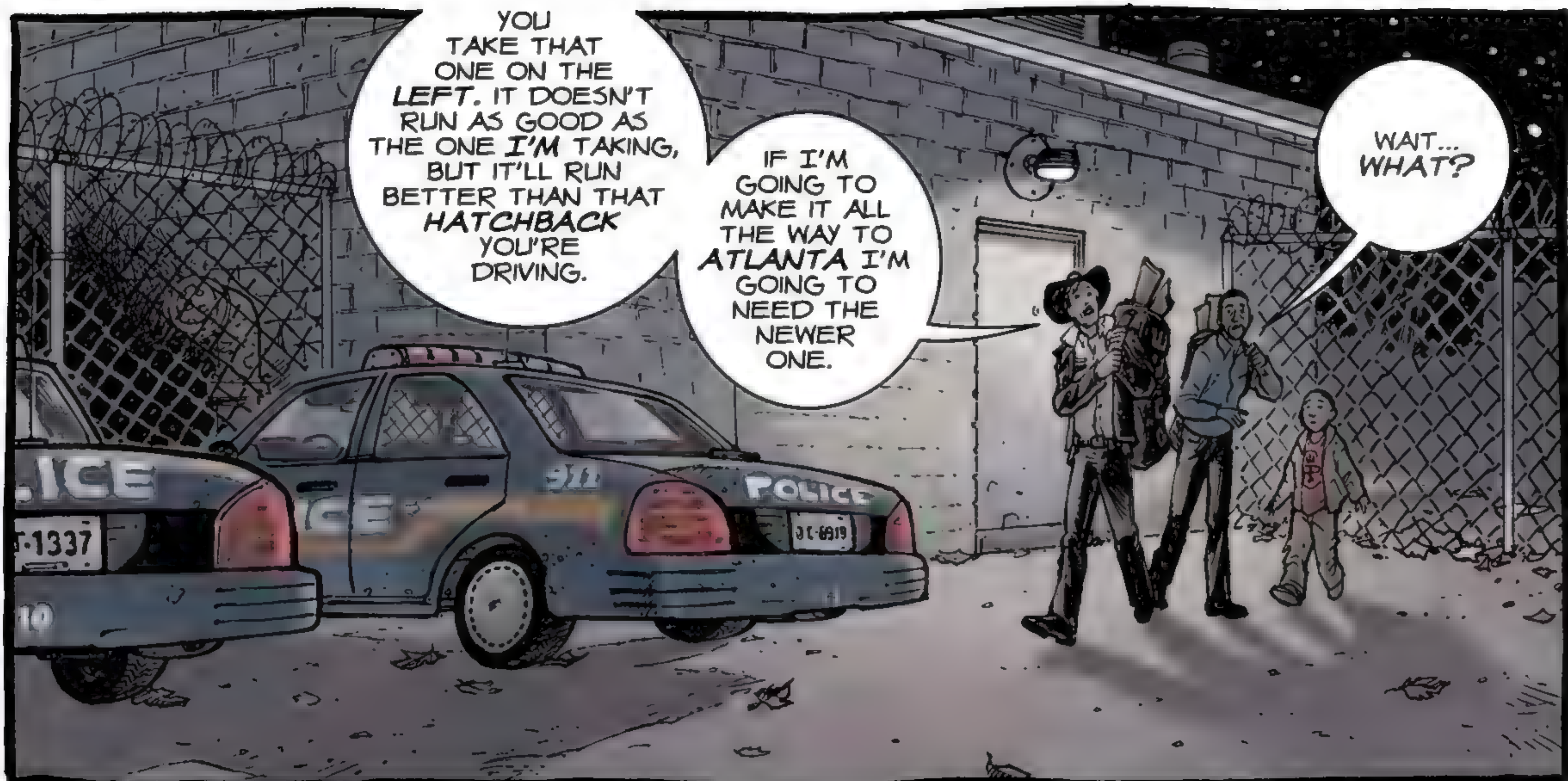
I KEEP A SPARE UNIFORM IN MY LOCKER.

I FIGURED IF I WAS GOING INTO A BIG CITY, AND THEY'VE GOT A TON OF PEOPLE HOLED UP THERE... I COULD GET AROUND EASIER BEING A **COP** SO I MIGHT AS WELL LOOK THE PART.



GRAB WHAT YOU'RE GETTING AND FOLLOW ME OUT BACK. I GOT ANOTHER **SURPRISE** FOR YOU.







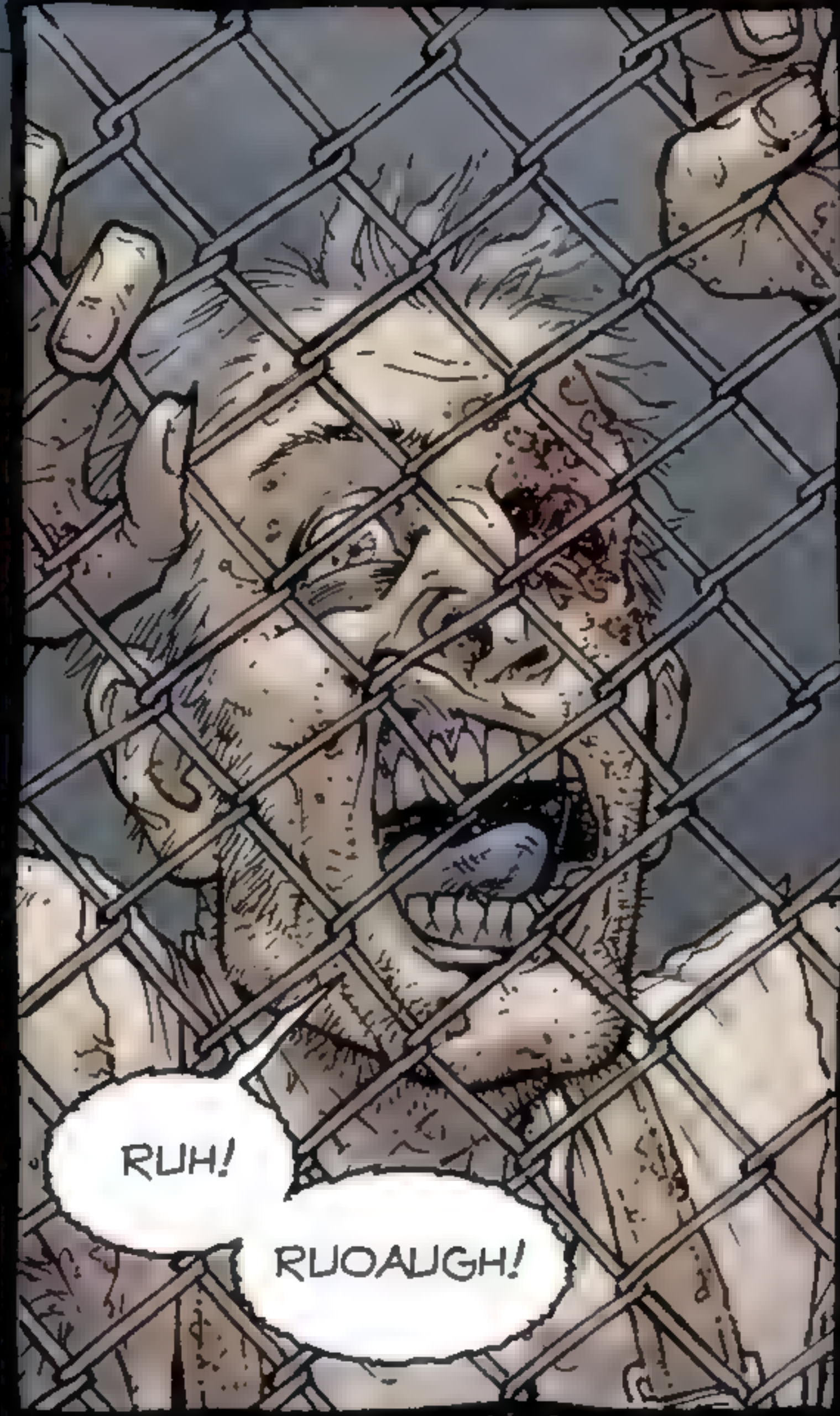


LOOK OUT!

UHH!

UHH!

UHH!



RUH!

RUOAUGH!

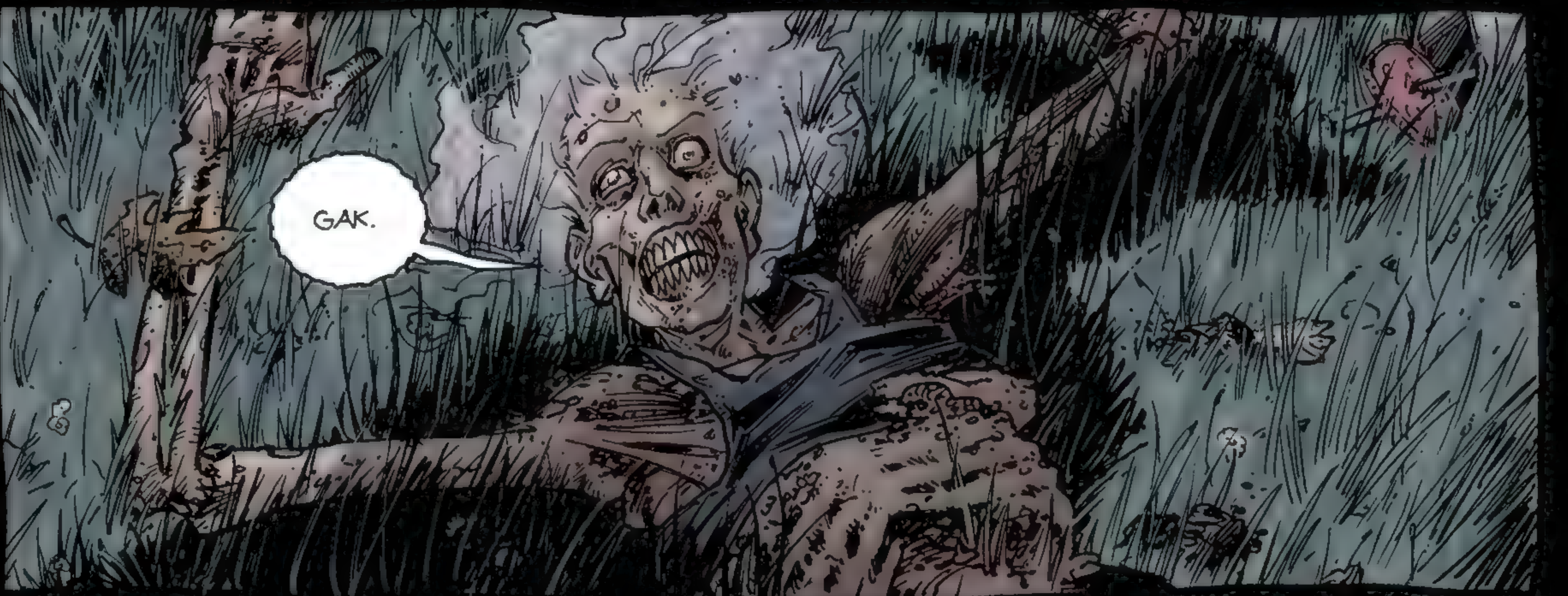


NO.

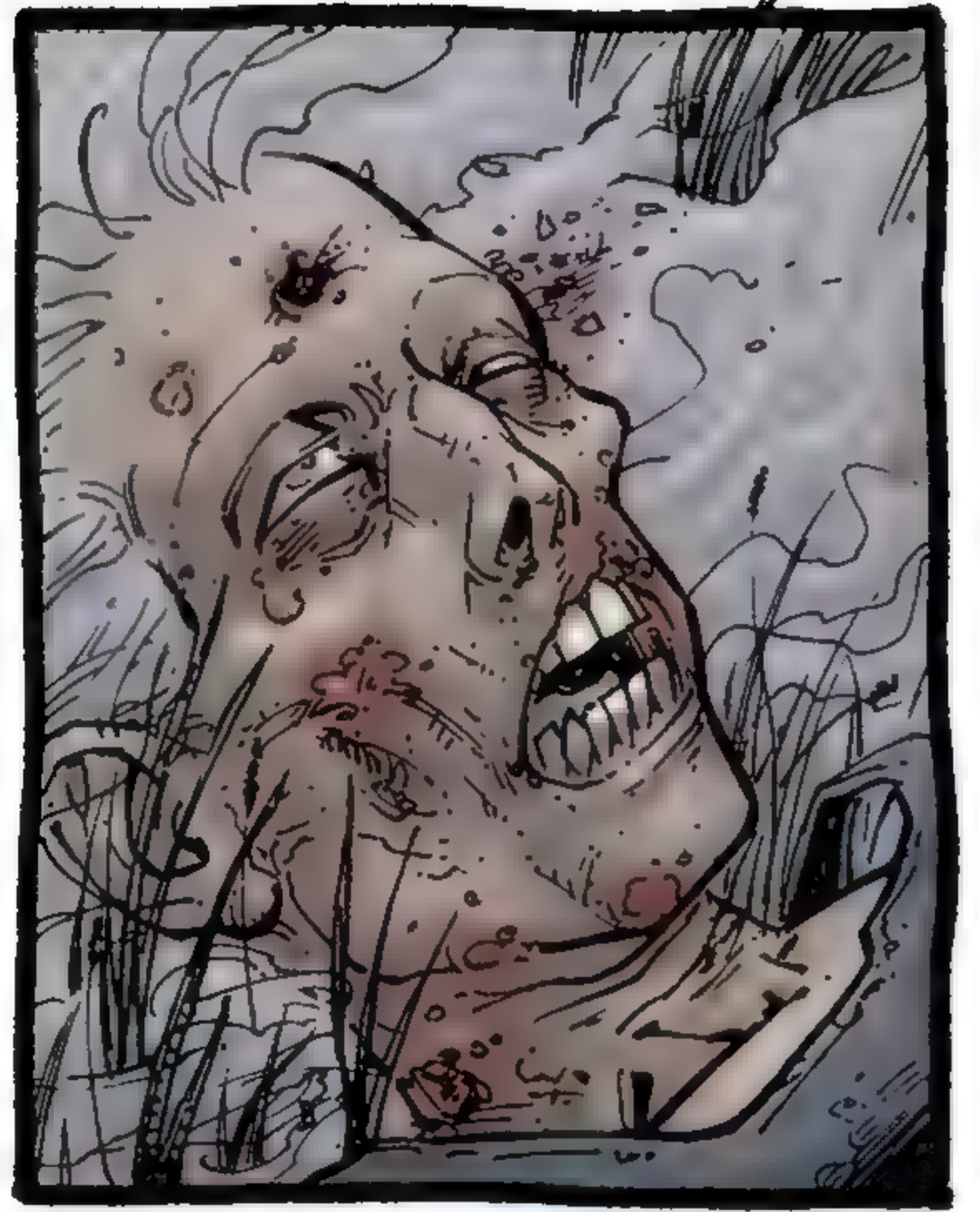
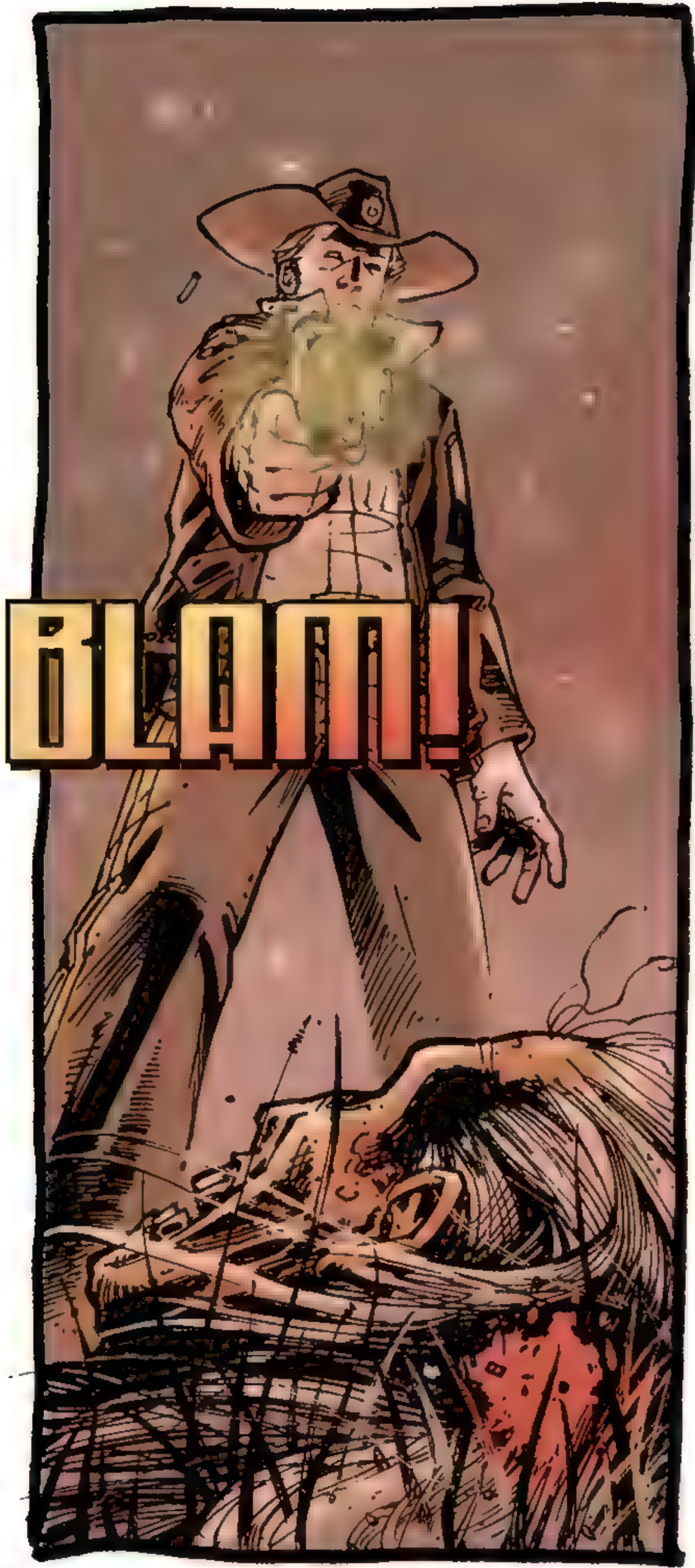














On the next page you'll see the original proposal for The Walking Dead as it was sent to Image. This was sent in somewhere around the end of November 2002. Eric Stephenson (now Publisher, then Marketing Director at Image) commented on the fact that the five-page story contained in the proposal was a lame horror movie opening... I'll admit it was terribly cliché, now that I look back on it. After hearing Eric's comments, I came up with the idea of Rick waking up in a coma and restructuring the book around that... and we all know what came of THAT don't we?

Another interesting change to note is that Lori was originally named Carol -- and they were originally from Pennsylvania, presumably Pittsburgh.

-Robert Kirkman



# The Walking Dead

By Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore





ANNOUNCEMENTS. WE  
ASSURE YOU WE WILL  
STAY ON AIR AS  
LONG AS WE  
CAN.

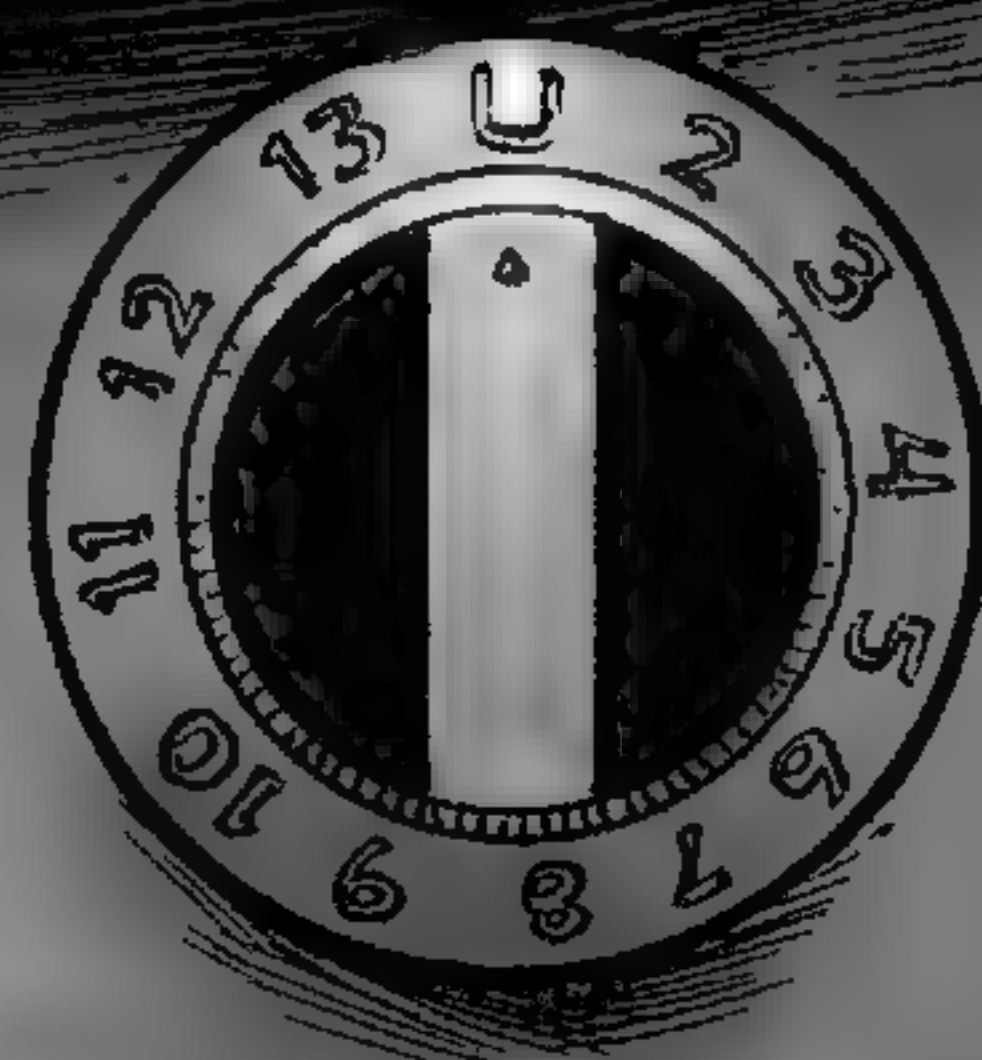
CONTINUING  
OUR AROUND THE  
CLOCK COVERAGE OF  
THE EVENT THAT IS  
SWEEPING THE NATION...  
BY ALL ACCOUNTS THE  
DEAD SEEM TO BE  
LEAVING THEIR GRAVES...  
RETURNING TO LIFE...  
AND FEEDING ON  
THE... FLESH... OF  
THE LIVING.

YES, YOU  
HEARD ME  
RIGHT. THE EYE  
WITNESS REPORTS  
FROM ACROSS THE  
GLOBE HAVE ALL  
BEEN CONFIRMED.  
YOU'VE SEEN THE  
STUNNING FOOTAGE.  
THERE IS NO DENYING  
THIS HORRENDOUS  
NEWS.

IT IS  
THE HUMBLE  
OPINION OF **THIS**  
NEWSMAN, THAT  
WE MAY WELL BE  
WITNESSING...THE  
END OF THE  
WORLD AS WE  
KNOW IT.



*Kirkman & Moore*  
ELECTRONICS INC.







JESUS! THIS IS JUST A SAD WAR OF THE WORLDS RIP OFF!

I--I DON'T KNOW, RICK... I THINK THIS LOOKS LIKE IT COULD BE REAL.

IT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR A WHILE.



OH, COME ON, CAROL! "WE MAY VERY WELL BE WITNESSING THE END OF THE WORLD." **THIS** SOUNDS REAL TO YOU?



THE NEWSCASTER SEEMS SCARED. HE WOULDN'T SEEM SO SCARED IF IT WASN'T REAL.



OF COURSE HE SEEMS SCARED! HE'S TRYING TO MAKE THIS CRAP BELIEVABLE.

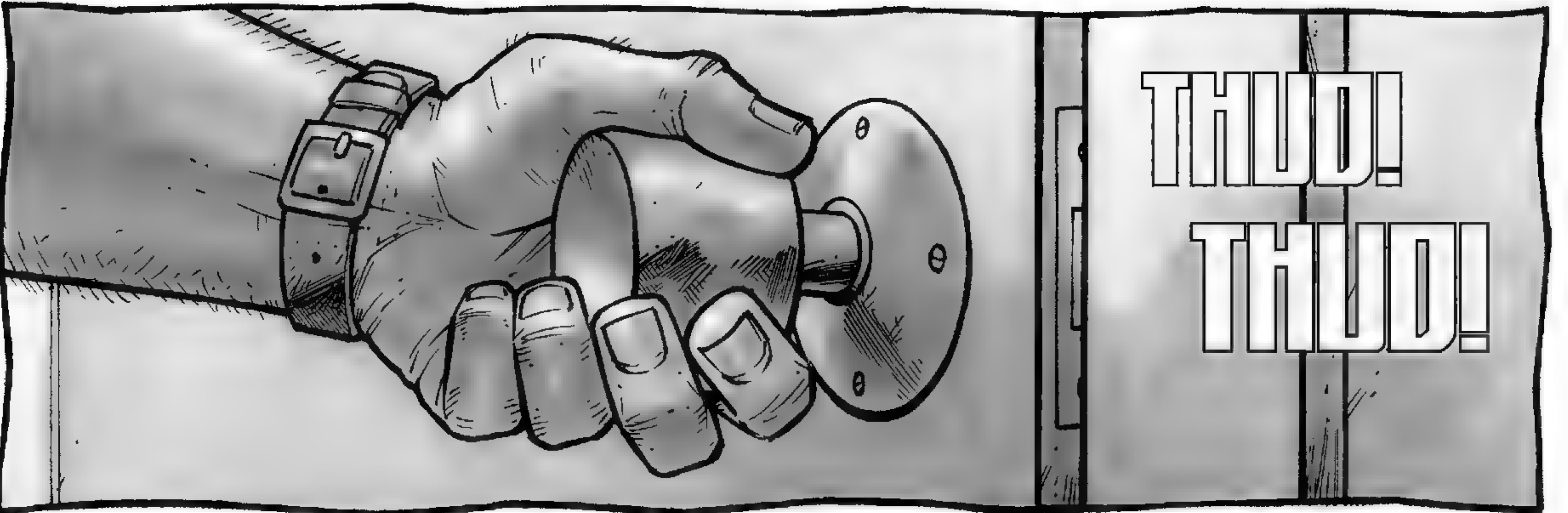
I'M NOT LISTENING TO ANOTHER WORD OF THIS...



...I'M TURNING THIS THING OFF AND WE'RE GOING TO BED.

**NO!**

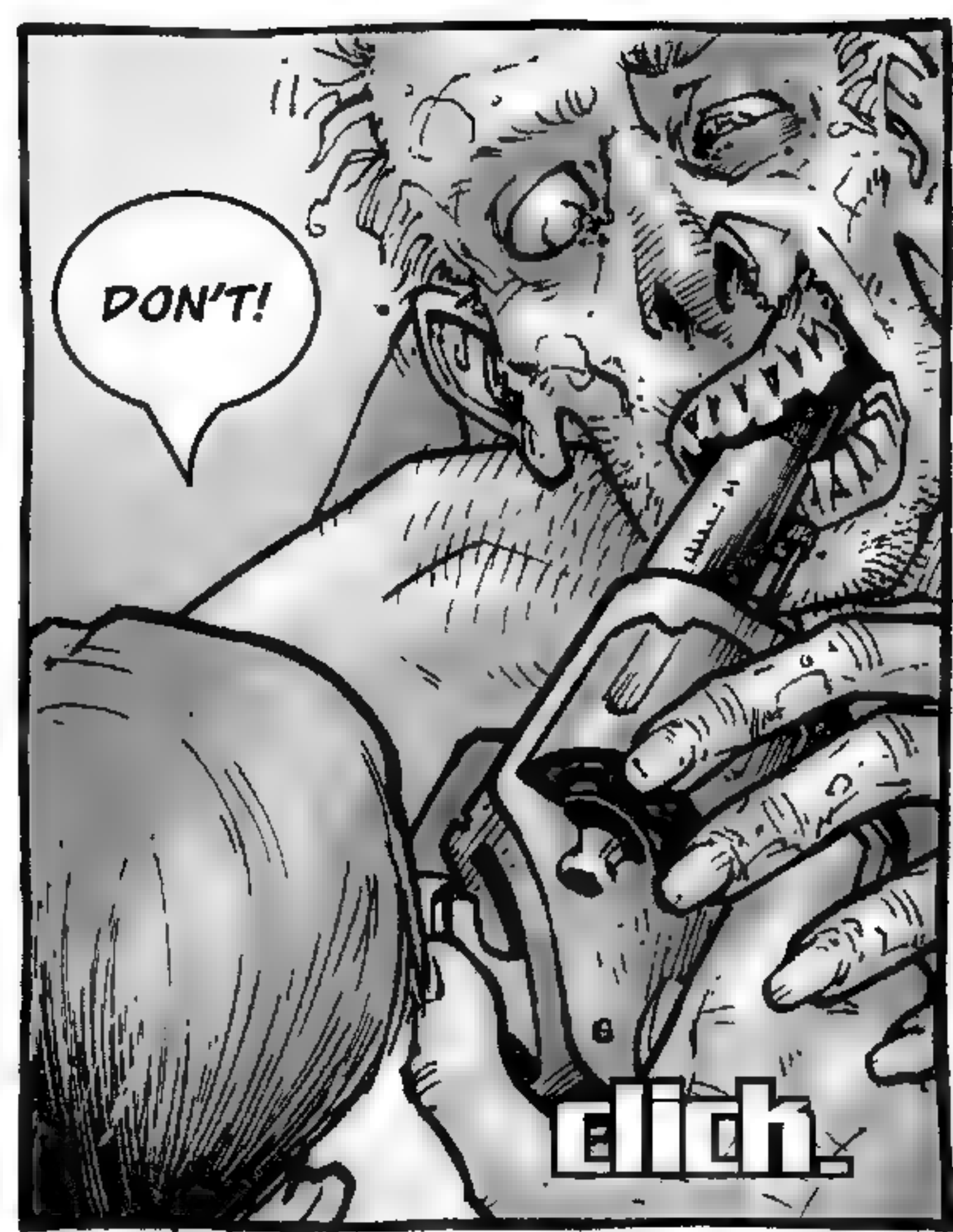












**BLAM!**





# **The Walking Dead Proposal**

## **Story**

Rick Grimes is a small town police officer in the state of Pennsylvania. He lives in a nice house out in the county with his wife, Carol and his son, Carl. Rick doesn't see much action, aside from target training he's never even fired his gun, he's by no means a hero. When the news hits that the undead are roaming the countryside committing acts of mass murder and eating their victims Rick must rise to the challenge to protect his family from the madness around him.

This book is about a man that will do anything to ensure that his family is safe. When private residences are deemed unsafe Rick takes his family on the road, in search of food, shelter, and something that at least resembles stability. We follow the Grimes family as they try to find a way to return to the normal life they once knew. The first story arc will detail their trek across the state that results in their takeover of an abandoned high school. This high school quickly becomes a well-defended stronghold, as life in America turns into something not unlike medieval times. Once a safe base of operations is established Rick will lead an army on a quest to expand the safe zone, and eventually take back the planet... or at least try.

## **Format**

The Walking Dead will be black and white, just like the best horror movies, in fact, even the covers could be black and white, further cutting down on the already minimal printing costs. The art will be completely gray-toned. Each issue will be a standard 22 pages. At the end of each year (sales allowing) a trade paperback collecting the 12 issues from the previous year will be released the same month as the first issue of the following year, providing a perfect jumping on point each year.(volume 1 shipping the same month as issue 13, etc.)

## **Contact**

Robert Kirkman



Another little known fact is that this series was originally planned to be called Night of the Living Dead, which looking back, would have been the most inaccurate title this book could have had.

NOTLD somehow fell into public domain, which means nobody owns it and is why there are about ten thousand different DVDs of the movie. So when I was planning my zombie epic I thought I'd use the name and get a little recognition out of it. It's tough starting a creator-owned book these days and every little bit of recognition you can get helps.

Everything created for the book was original, we were only using that title. The first page of the proposal used some dialogue from the movie and the plan originally was to have the story take place in the '60s. Which is why Rick and Lori (Carol) have such a crappy TV in the proposal story.

Jim Valentino (former publisher of Image Comics) suggested that if everything was original why not just change the name and own it. He pointed out that even though NOTLD was in public domain and we could use the title, it made no sense to create something under that title that couldn't be owned. Smart man. So I came up with the title The Walking Dead and the rest is history.



On this page you'll see the original first page of the proposal and the original zombie faces. Another thing Jim noted about the NOTLD proposal was that the zombie wasn't rotted enough. Our plan at first was to have fairly normal looking zombies early in the series and have them get grosser as the book went on. But I had Tony rot this zombie up to make Jim happy.





# THE RISE OF THE WALKING DEAD

Image publisher Eric Stephenson talks with Robert Kirkman about The Walking Dead's first decade—and what comes next.

**Eric:** I brought this up when we talked at Image Expo, but the tenth anniversary of The Walking Dead makes me think about the fact that you and I have actually been working here at Image for 11 years now, almost exactly, because you started doing stuff at Image in 2002.

And the first thing you did was Super Patriot with Erik Larsen and that was kind of how you got your foot in the door. But you and I met shortly after that at a barbecue at Josh Blaylock's house in Chicago. We were both at Chicago Con and after talking to you for many months on the phone, it was interesting to actually meet you in person. And we've kind of been doing this talking on the phone thing and working together ever since. That's not really a question. That's just a statement.

**Robert:** *No, no, I'll dive in. Listen, I feel like our relationship and The Walking Dead are intertwined in really cool ways because when The Walking Dead started, you were the Marketing Director at Image and over the ten-year life of The Walking Dead, you have actually risen through the ranks at Image, going from Marketing Director to Executive Director to Publisher, along with The Walking Dead. And our relationship has grown and your working situation at Image, it's expanded as you've taken more and more control. It's all intertwined and I think that's kind of a cool thing.*

**Eric:** Well, one of the cool things about it, one of the great things about comics in general is when you can work with people that you get along with really well, it just kind of makes the whole process a little bit better. There are a lot of people that you talk to just over the phone or through email or whatever, and you never actually have that much contact with outside of conventions. But when you meet people and actually spend



time with them and get to know them, that kind of makes things just a little bit better for everybody involved. I know that we were talking on the phone a lot before The Walking Dead came around.

I remember around the time you were pitching the book, you pitched a couple of different things. You initially pitched a book called "Death Planet." Then you pitched another version of The Walking Dead that wasn't the final version. And then you pitched The Walking Dead. But whenever you would pitch something, we talked a lot about this stuff on the phone, whether it was at work or you would call me on the cellphone and I'd talk to you while I was driving home from work. I think it makes the entire kind of working relationship a little bit better when you have someone who you can actually just say, "Hey, I've got an idea, I want to talk



to you about it.” And I know with Walking Dead, when you did finally pitch the final version of that, it was not immediately met with a resounding yes. As I recall, (former Image Publisher) Jim Valentino was not crazy about actually publishing the book.

*Robert: Yeah, the history of it is kind of interesting. I actually pitched a science fiction zombie comic called “Death Planet” as you mentioned with Tony Moore attached on art, and that got turned down pretty quickly and so I went back to the drawing board. I tried to come up with something that was a little bit more relatable, something that was a little bit more down-to-earth.*

*And what I came up with was essentially The Walking Dead. But at the time, I had the idea that it would be really cool to use the name “Night of the Living Dead” just because it was something that was very recognizable and also something I had heard was in the public domain. So basically, The Walking Dead under a different title and that also was more or less turned down, but the concept I think intrigued you and Jim enough for you to give me some pointers. Basically what I was told was that version of The Walking Dead was cool and all, but you never want to use “The Night of the Living Dead” title which again is a blessing.*

*I really appreciate all of the input that was given to me early on because it very much steered me in the right direction, which was great. But also, zombie books weren’t very popular at the time and I talked about this a lot. I like to say that it would be the exact right thing for Jim as a publisher to do. You know, he said zombie books aren’t very popular historically. They have all done really poorly and if this is gonna sell, it has to have some kind of a hook. And while Jim was doing his job as a publisher, I was doing my job as a creator.*

*And I really felt strongly that the Walking Dead, as it was, without a hook, as just a straight drama, set against the world of the zombie apocalypse, was a wild endeavor and that the hook wasn’t necessary. So I did what I had to do*

*and I actually came up with an alternate story that I would say wasn’t necessarily true. You could also use the word “lie,” but that’s no fun. So I came back to you guys and I said, “Look, you’re right, it does need a hook and that’s why after a few issues I’m gonna reveal that this is actually an alien invasion story. That these zombies are actually put on Earth by aliens and it’ll eventually be revealed that it’s this really cool sci-fi epic involving alien invasion. You know the seeds will be planted very early on, but it will be a while before it’s actually revealed.”*

*Eric: It seemed much more conspiratorial than that at the time because I remember you called up and I think we’d been talking earlier in the day about it and I was like, “Yeah, this isn’t gonna happen. Here’s why,” and I passed it onto you there needs to be a better hook. I got home that night and I think I’d been in the door just a few minutes and you call me. And you had said, “Listen, I’ve been thinking about what you said about the hook and there’s something I haven’t told you yet.”*

*And you laid out everything that you just said about the aliens and you would be planting all these seeds and later on when the invasion was revealed, it was going to be this really cool thing. And I was just like, “Okay, I think that may be what Jim wanted to hear, that it’s definitely different from any zombie book I’ve ever heard of before. I’ll talk to him about it.” And so Jim got excited by that and we did the book. But then later on down the line, it may have even been once Charlie was on the book...*

*Robert: No, you called me right after the first issue came out and you had read the printed copy of it. And that’s when you called and you said, “Hey, I read the first issue.” Maybe it was before it was published, when I sent the pages. You were like, “Hey, I read the first issue. It’s great. But I didn’t see any hints at this alien invasion plot that’s being set up.”*

*Eric: I gave you the benefit of the doubt for more than a couple issues.*



**Robert:** No, I remember specifically, I remember it was after the first issue because you were like, "Is it gonna come in at #2 or #3 or whatever?" We can argue about this. It'll be great fun. And then I replied, "Well, look, I lied to you guys so that you would pick up the book and I'm sorry about that." And your reply to that was, "Oh, yeah, I don't think we really need this." So that was good.

**Eric:** The first issue was really good and I tell people all the time whenever they ask me about The Walking Dead, that prior to The Walking Dead I had zero interest in zombies whatsoever. I'm not a guy like you who's super into horror movies, and I read the first issue and I was like, "Wow, that was just a good story." And as far as Rick goes, he is a cool leading character. So I was on board. But yeah, it absolutely didn't need to have aliens in it at any point. Looking back now, if that had shown up, it would have just been ridiculous.

**Robert:** Yeah, yeah. I mean I'm sure I would have done it in a cool way. Don't sell me short. But yeah, it would have been pretty silly.

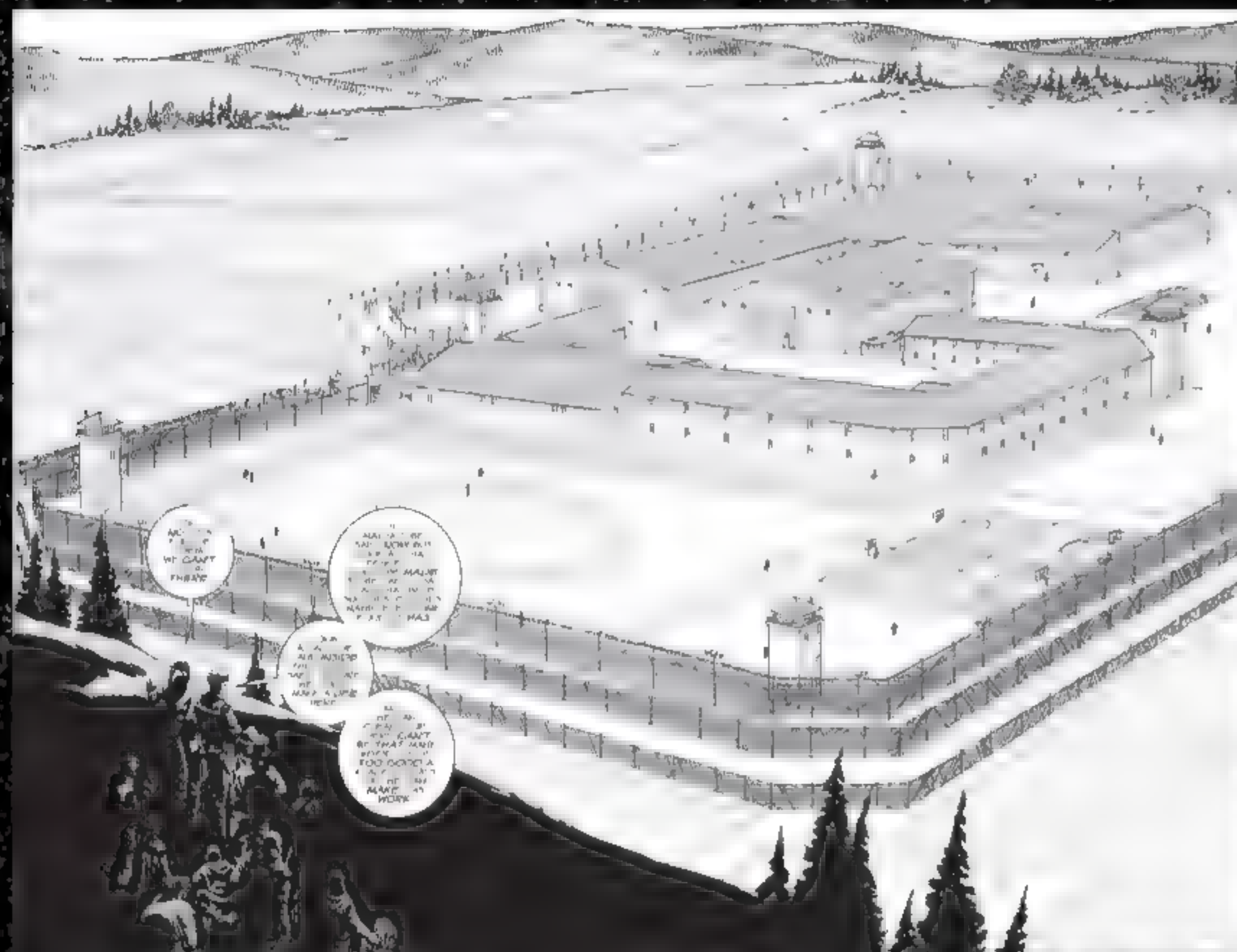
**Eric:** Now when you pitched this, how far did you have the story mapped out at that point?

**Robert:** Well, I mean--

**Eric:** What were your expectations?

**Robert:** Well, my expectations were that the book would last for six issues and get cancelled. But I was trying to do The Walking Dead as the "zombie movie that never ends." In order to do that, I had to have a pretty long road map laid out so that in the event that it was successful, I would know where I would go and stuff. And the original pitch that's printed on the back of the first hardcover says that they're originally going to find a school and they'll make that a home base, and then eventually that will be their central location and they'll start expanding civilization after that. And they'll start encountering other pockets of civilization.

So I had it pretty roughly worked out to the point where it's at now. Now the school became the prison and they ended up leaving the prison and eventually going to Alexandria before they started encountering other civilizations and getting into the wars and stuff. But I had a pretty rough idea. Now I didn't know who the Governor was when I pitched the book. I hadn't yet decided to introduce Michonne into the book.



But I had a ridiculous amount of stuff worked out, which at the time seemed foolish because everything I had done before then was either not doing too well or had already been cancelled. So I felt like it was pretty bold, but it seemed to work out.

**Eric:** Yeah, but I think at the same time, whenever you're pitching for a project, whether you're doing a work for hire thing or creator-owned, you kind of have to look forward and plan for the best. Otherwise, you're gonna be kneecapping your own ideas.

**Robert:** Well, look, people ask me all the time if I'm still into The Walking Dead after having written a hundred issues or whatever. And the truth of the matter is, I get more and more excited the longer it goes because I finally get to do this thing that I had planned, but would only work if the book had been around for so long. And it's really cool to have done all the stories that I've done that lead up to what I'm doing now while I'm planning the next hundred issues. So I kind of feel like I'm always gonna be excited about this because there's always something new that I'm building towards. Something new



*that's being set up in the current issues that people may or may not realize.*

**Eric:** Also, one of the things that's kind of unique and cool about *The Walking Dead*, and actually I think about all books you do, is nobody is safe. You know you build up these characters who people are attached to over the course of several issues, and then sometimes they're gone all of a sudden. They get brutally killed or sometimes they get killed in kind of a flash. But anyway, as you get rid of these characters and then you're introducing new characters, it's not like you're stuck doing the same thing over and over again.

**Robert:** *With Invincible and The Walking Dead, these are series that are designed to last for a very long time. You can't change a book too much. You can't make it completely alien to people that have been supporting it and reading it for years. But if you get into that rut of telling the same stories over and over again, people are gonna get bored and it's kind of a fun thing. It's also the worst thing about comics in general and I think it's why people want to quit comics. Everyone who's reading a comic is like, "How many issues of this thing am I gonna read? When this thing starts suckin', I'm out."*

*So you have to constantly be in touch and I like it because it makes you deliver. It gives you that drive to keep things interesting, keep things awesome, and keep moving the story. It is sometimes a grind, but I'm always worried that every issue could be a reader's last issue and so you always have to be doing something cool and something unexpected to keep people going, "Oh wow, this is a really cool thing that I'm enjoying month-in and month-out. I'm gonna stick with this."*

**Eric:** Well, I think you set the bar pretty high right from the beginning. I know still one of my favorite issues is the end of the first trade paperback, issue six. You have the scene where Carl shoots Shane and that's just completely shocking and I think in a lot of cases other writers may have pulled the punch on that one, but

you ended that first arc with such a bang. And I think that just lets people know right from the beginning, don't get too comfortable here and don't expect to know what's gonna happen next.



**Robert:** *This is a big part of this world. If you weren't killing characters constantly, I feel like it would be unrealistic. You kind of have to have characters dying so that people see how dangerous a world is and how to keep it interesting. Some backstory about that issue though... I really did consider killing Rick instead of Shane. I had a whole storyline worked out where Shane was gonna kill Rick and Carl was gonna see it.*

*And then Carl, the kid who knows that Shane killed his father, has to deal with the fact that he's in a camp with this guy. You never know if people are gonna believe him. That was kind of going to be the story of the book for a while with this kid dealing with having to live with this guy who killed his father. And Shane will be very manipulative and like, "No, you don't understand. Your father was crazy or your father was bit by a zombie." Like there was a reason why I had to do this. And so Carl would be questioning what he actually saw.*

*I thought it would be a cool thing and I really did want to shake things up quite a bit with that issue, and I thought killing the person that people perceived as the main character would be a cool thing. But I had other stuff worked out with Rick and I did worry that it would be too much of a change that was gonna drive people away. So in the end, I decided not to do it.*



**Eric:** Now you mentioned the Governor and that he wasn't a part of your original plan. But obviously over the history of the book, the Governor's kind of as close as you can get to a super villain-type character. At what point did you decide that you wanted to inject a character like that into the book?



**Robert:** After the prison had been set up and having dealt with Thomas (the serial killer), Rick and the survivors seem to have everything all figured out, and I really wanted to throw things into chaos. And I really changed things up in a way that up until that point, the characters had just been dealing with zombies and that was the main threat of the book. And I thought, what if they encountered the mirror image of their community?

What if someone had set up a small town as opposed to a prison, and there was someone running it who was just like Rick, but was completely the opposite of Rick in a lot of ways. The Governor was always meant to be Rick Grimes, and one single thing had happened that changed him completely.

It was basically the Governor's daughter,

Penny, was like Carl and if Carl had died very early on in the zombie apocalypse, this is how Rick would have turned out. And so that was kind of the thinking behind who the Governor was, introducing this character that was very similar, but in some ways polar opposites, and having him butt heads with Rick for a while.

**Eric:** Now Thomas was kind of your first human antagonist. Up to that point they're on the run from the zombies, they're trying to survive, they're trying to find a safe haven. And they get into prison and you've got this guy who's killing people and to me, that was the first point in the book where the actual really scary thing in this world is not the zombies, it's other people.

And then you go further into that with the Governor and the people at Woodbury. And ever since they left the prison and have been moving around, everyone they run into is kind of like a different level of scary in terms of how people are dealing with this whole situation. The pinnacle of that at this point is Negan. Was that something that you had planned out from the beginning?

**Robert:** Yeah, definitely. I mean Shane was the first human that really posed a threat, and I think people saw why he was cracking and it was a very personal story about his love for Rick's wife, Lori, and you kind of got why he turned.

**Eric:** I guess Shane was the first human threat. But at the time, because you could relate to what he was going through, you kind of didn't see it that way.

**Robert:** Then you get to the prison and Thomas is a prisoner in a prison. And so you're like, "Well, he's a dangerous guy." He was put in prison, like he was dangerous. And so those two human threats are from the old world, from before the fall of civilization. They're leftover threats that we encounter in our everyday lives. But then starting with the Governor, we're starting to understand that people that survive in this world are changed by this world.



The world itself is actually making everyone more dangerous or dangerous to begin with. And really, one thing I had planned out is that I really tried to be very careful about crafting the evolution of Rick's group. When they encounter the Governor in those issues, they are terrible at dealing with that. Rick gets his hand cut off, Michonne gets raped and everybody gets beat up. And then the Governor attacks the prison and half of them die. They're just ejected from the prison and there's no way to handle it. And they're just really bad at surviving at that point. And I really wanted to show them getting better and Rick especially was learning how to handle these things. By the time the attempted rape of Carl on the side of the road in #57, by the time that happens, you see Rick just go overboard and he hacks this guy to pieces. And we don't really show it, but you know that's what happened and this is Rick finally getting to a point where he's able to survive in this world. So by the time they get where they're hunted by the hunters in #62-66, they deal with the hunters in one issue. They're hunted and they're scared and they're dangerous and they take Dale and they're eating Dale and there's this huge threat that you don't know how they're gonna deal with it. And then Rick finally finds them and they're just dealt with.

It's like, "Oh, you guys are screwing with the wrong people." You don't mess with Rick Grimes and his group. They've learned from the experience at the prison. They've learned from being on the road. And now they're different people. And so by the time Negan is introduced, I have to evolve the threat to match what I've done with these characters. So it wasn't that I necessarily planned to evolve the villains from issue-to-issue, but I feel like as time is passing, the only people that are going to survive are the strong. And the strong in this world are also crazy and dangerous and to a certain extent, evil.

Those are the only kind of people that are going to be able to thrive in this world to last as long as they have. And Rick definitely has blood on his hands and has done some pretty terrible things.

And so at this point in the book, anyone that they encounter, that person is gonna be very dangerous and very capable, one or the other. They can be very good and very capable like Jesus, or they can be very deadly like Negan.

Eric: Right. I was actually just talking to somebody about this last night, because obviously The Walking Dead's on TV now and I feel like Rick fits in very well with the current crowd of lead characters on TV because there's kind of a thread connecting him with Walter White on "Breaking Bad" or Don Draper on "Mad Men" or Nucky Thompson on "Boardwalk Empire," where there are these characters who flawed, but they're not necessarily bad guys.

They're all, I think, at heart, good people who do some really bad things. I just think it's interesting how Walking Dead as a comic book was around before any of those shows were around. So you kind of tapped into something that was kind of out there in the collective consciousness.

Robert: Well, Tony Soprano was around before Walking Dead, but yeah, I think people are really drawn these days to flawed heroes. If you look at entertainment over the years, you have to keep upping your ante and changing things up. And a guy who is a good guy who does good is uninteresting at this point. It's not something that's really going to engage an audience.

I think that to some extent is why DC Comics has such a problem with getting a Superman movie to work. It's not something that modern audiences necessarily gravitate towards. I feel very fortunate that it has kind of become en vogue for these very shady, I guess that's the best word, their morals kind of change on a dime depending on the situation. Characters like that are very popular now. And Rick Grimes is definitely one of those.

Eric: I think part of the reason they're popular is because people can relate to that after a certain extent. The world obviously isn't black and white, or there



are a lot of shades of gray. There's a lot of stuff about Superman if you kind of pick away at it, it's just not realistic in any way. The idea of the guy who just rigidly adheres to this one code, it's kind of like an outdated vision of heroism. I think a lot of people are just like, "No, I prefer my entertainment to be populated with people you can relate to."

**Robert:** *By the core, it's just more realistic. It's not very realistic for someone to be a rigid, always altruistic, always good person, especially in situations that are interesting, especially in situations that are very stressful or dangerous. You're not going to see someone surviving around the apocalypse that is always getting cats out of trees and saving people. You're not gonna see someone who has cancer who needs to make money, necessarily always making the right decisions and always doing good things.*

*So I just feel like it's an attempt to make things a little bit more realistic, a little bit more real world. The Walking Dead to a certain extent thrives just because the zombies are a backdrop and this is really an attempt to tell real stories about how real people would deal with survival. Now a guy's got a pet tiger, that's somewhat out there, but it's always something that could, to a certain extent, happen in real life. And that's what we've always tried to do.*

**Eric:** Now Ezekiel seems to be a character you're having a lot of fun with who is actually a good guy. But something I've observed over the life of the book to date is you really seem to get a kick out of writing the bad guys. Like there are a lot of memorable moments with the Governor. And now with Negan, who is one of my favorite characters over the entire course of the book, I can just tell that you love writing his dialogue.

**Robert:** *Yeah, it's one of the most fun things about the book right now. It doesn't mean that he's safe, but I really just love getting in there and adding just the most absurd shit. A lot of times he says something that's completely foul, something that I would never say.*

*But then every now and then, he'll say something that I've actually said to people at times. So it's kind of fun to get in there and just have a character that can comment on situations in a really absurd way that is very alien to the book. Like no one has ever really behaved like Negan before and to me that is really exciting.*

**Eric:** Oh, yeah. I think just from a reader's perspective, maybe I'm alone in this, but finding the new uses of the word "fuck" that you put into that guy's mouth is very consistently entertaining. Maybe that's the wrong way to characterize it. I guess you find a lot of different ways to cram that word into a sentence multiple times.

**Robert:** *It's sometimes a challenge, but I feel like it's a worthwhile endeavor.*



**Eric:** At the end of #114, he says, "We're the big swinging dick of this world. Have been for a long fucking time. But it seems people are forgetting that. So now our big swinging dick is gonna swing harder and faster until we take off like a motherfucking helicopter and blow all these motherfuckers away." Actually, you were kind of holding back there, I feel, because he actually only says motherfucker twice.

**Robert:** *If he's dropping the f-bomb every other word, it's gonna eventually lose its effect.*

**Eric:** Actually it's funny. I just switched back to the page before that where it had the panel where he says, "Motherfucking motherfuckers." [laughter] I was working



on a Nowhere Men script and I had a bit where one of the characters was gonna say, "What the motherfucking fuck?" And I didn't go with that because it just sounds like I'm having them talk like Negan.

**Robert:** Well, sorry about that. [laughter]

**Eric:** What was the process of coming up with him as a character? Did you know from the beginning that you were going to have this guy be completely over-the-top, foul-mouthed?

**Robert:** Yeah, pretty much. I don't recall where that came from. I know that I had the plan for Glenn to die for a long time. And there was a time where I was trying to work it out to where Rick would be put in a situation where he would have to kill Glenn in order to save Carl. Because I thought that having Rick murder Glenn would be something that it would be very heartbreaking for him and very gut-wrenching for the readers.



That would lead to a lot of cool stories, but manufacturing a situation where he would have to kill Glenn or Carl would die was starting to be a little irky and wasn't very realistic. The Negan character came out of that situation. I wanted somebody that could really show Rick how powerless he actually is. And he would have to be powerless in order to be put in that position of killing one or the other.

I always think about some of the memorable deaths in the book and again, I feel like escalation is something that's very important to the series and if you're not constantly escalating, then you're

not as good as you used to be. I think if there was never another death that was as horrific and heartbreaking as Tyrese's beheading, then I wouldn't really be doing my job. And so I wanted to really send Glenn off in a way that would top that.

Well, it was my attempt to top it. And to make it just like horrific and also just to show Rick there's this new threat in town and you don't know how to deal with it.

I've kind of gotten to a point where people are like, "Rick can handle anything, right?" And I wanted to come in and very boldly say, "No, actually, Rick can't handle this." And put him in a situation where he has no control. I always knew that Glenn was the one that was gonna get it. A lot of people think that when I was writing the "eeny, meeny, miny, moe" scene that I was actually just arbitrarily picking while I was writing that scene. And that would be awesome, but I actually didn't do that.

I just wanted to make it playful. I knew that the Glenn death was gonna be so upsetting and that it was gonna be so heartbreaking because it was that way for me. As the creator, I didn't want to lose Glenn and I was very upset about that. I always tend to use myself as a judge for how the scene's gonna be taken.

But I wanted to play up how terrible this event is by having a guy seemingly having the time of his life and really cracking jokes and enjoying himself while he was doing this. Because I felt like it would make it sting that much more. And I really wanted to bring Negan in with a bang and set the stage for him in a pretty epic way and the scene kind of came together from that.

**Eric:** Because you mentioned that you're always looking to top yourself in regard to memorable moments like that, I feel like it shares that characteristic with Invincible. For people who haven't read the book, I guess it's considered kind of spoiler territory, but there's a very brutal battle in #12 that sets the tone for what that book is gonna be like.



There's been a lot of like crazy violence in that book. For people who have read Avengers or X-Men or Superman or whatever, there's no preparation for the kind of violence and brutality that you have in Invincible. So the fact that you are seeking to outdo yourself every time, do you ever worry that you're becoming de-sensitized to that type of horror and violence?

**Robert:** I don't think I'm de-sensitized to it when we do things on the TV show that we've done in the comics. Seeing them in real life when I'm on set or watching them moving and with sound and looking real on the show, actually disturbs me to an extent that would probably surprise most people. So I know that I'm okay. But I will say that I guess there is a concern, am I never going to not be able to top myself?

Am I ever going to get to a point where there isn't any way to outdo the things that I do well? All I would really say is I've got a list of things tied up in my back pocket that are kind of cued up that I know will happen to characters eventually. Some of them are so bad I don't really like to think about them. So I know that I'm going to be able to always sort of up the ante and continue to progress that story and to continue to just do unexpected things. And then a lot of people complain about, "Oh, you're just trying to shock people." That's not really it.

I'm trying to tell a long form story that goes for years and years and you have to be able to progress the story in ways that are interesting. I feel like shocking deaths are kind of essential that. I have some long reaching plans that will hopefully ensure that I continue to up the ante. But we'll see. Eventually at some point I'm probably gonna run out of terrible things to happen to people and then I'll end the book. Hopefully that won't happen for many, many decades.

**Eric:** Now you mentioned sometimes stuff that's done on the show shocks and horrifies you. Has there ever been a point when you've gotten pages back from Charlie Adlard on The Walking Dead or maybe from Ryan Ottley on Invincible,

where you had written some gruesome scene and then you get back to your work and you're just like, "Oh, holy shit, that is way more horrific than I was expecting?"

**Robert:** Well, I don't know about horrific, but I know that Lori's death in #48, when she's shot and the baby gets shot and then she falls on top of the baby... in the script I had written that I wanted to see the baby's arm coming out from under Lori after she had collapsed, so the people would know that she had fallen on top of the baby and that she had basically crushed the baby. So if they didn't realize the baby had been killed when it was shot, they would definitely know that she had crushed it when she fell on it and then her dead body was laying on it and that they would both be eaten by zombies.



So I wanted to make sure that people knew that that baby was dead, which as I say that out loud right now, makes me a little bit uncomfortable with who I am as a person. But I thought that was important to the scene. I remember saying, "Yeah, I want a terrible scene and Lori is dead so you have a dead look on her face and she's on top of the baby." When I look at that panel even today, it's very hard to look at. When that page came in, I was just like, "Oh, but that baby's arm, that little baby arm. Oh, why did I do that?"

**Eric:** What's even worse is that when Charlie did that cover for #100 and you got all of the people who have died over the last 100 issues and there's that baby arm.

**Robert:** Yeah, that baby was on that



*cover. Yeah, I may be a little reluctant.*

**Eric:** You made the poster of that, too, and I remember when you said that was going to be a poster and I was just like, there is a poster of a bunch of dead people. Who wants a poster of a bunch of dead people? And it turned out they did because I think orders were really good on that, actually.

Now here's something else though about the baby. Correct me, maybe I'm just remembering wrong, but I thought there was a point where you kind of were toying with the idea of the baby living and the Governor rescuing the baby and raising the baby as his own? Is that something I just imagined or did we talk about that at one point?

**Robert:** *There was a plan originally that Lori would disappear and then when the Governor attacked the prison on the tank, Lori would be on a leash and riding the tank, and you would find out that Lori hadn't actually died, but that she had been taken by the Governor and made into like a slave wife or something. It was gonna be a heartbreaking thing for Rick to see his wife who had to endure this time with the Governor in order to survive. She would have had the baby during that time and would have the baby with her. I don't know what the outcome of that was gonna be, but yeah, that was an original storyline that I ended up not doing. But yeah, there was some more terrible stuff for the Governor to do that didn't quite make it into the book.*

**Eric:** Which is probably for the best. It's funny because that actually brings up another thing, which is that I feel like over the years, every now and then I'll ask you things about where the book is going. And you'll say, "Oh, well, this and this is going to happen." And sometimes that stuff happens and sometimes it doesn't. I feel like there have been numerous instances over the years where you've outlined something that was gonna happen over the course of several issues. And at some point you shift gears and you go off in another direction. How often would you say that that sort of thing happens?

**Robert:** *There's been three or four big times where I've had a shift. I think one of the most memorable ones was at the end of #18, it was supposed to end with Lori throwing her wedding ring at Rick and saying, "I want a divorce" or "We're divorced." And then I was gonna deal with Rick and Lori and how they were stuck in the prison together, but they were ending their marriage, and how awkward that would be and just how hard that would be in an apocalyptic scenario.*

*While I was writing that issue, I was realizing this is bullshit. She wouldn't turn on him and she was supposed to be like really, really upset about the way he handled the Thomas thing and the way he was acting with Carl. It just didn't seem genuine to me. So that's why the third volume of the trade, which ends on #18, ends on that cliffhanger with Dexter (the prisoner who tries to remove Rick and the others at gunpoint). I switched gears very late in the game. I've ended trades with cliffhangers since then, which I think is kinda cool. But that time I definitely did it by accident. That was a time where I definitely shifted the storyline just because it didn't make sense. It wasn't as cool as I thought it would be. There have been a few times where I've done that.*

*I'm always in search of a better idea, so if I'm working on the book and I have a roadmap and I know what I'm doing, but I come up with a better idea, I love the freedom of being able to go, "Okay, this storyline that was gonna take ten issues is now gonna take thirty issues because I'm gonna do this thing in between before I get back to this other stuff, and then I'm gonna wrap that up." It doesn't usually affect the longer plan, the multi-year plan where they're eventually gonna do whatever. But it's like fun little detours here and there.*

**Eric:** I remember talking to you a couple of years back. It was before they actually got to the community and we were talking about what was gonna happen in the book. And you said, "Oh yeah, they're gonna get to this community. They're gonna get in there. Rick's gonna be like the sheriff in the community."



Michonne's gonna hang up her sword. Carl's gonna be going to school and stuff. And then they're all gonna find out that that doesn't work out and Rick, Michonne and Carl are gonna leave." And you talked about what was gonna happen after that. But then it's like once they got into the community and everything was happening, that's not what happened.



**Robert:** [laughter] Yeah, I was gonna do a stretch on the book where basically Rick, Carl and Michonne had gone through so much and had done so much that they couldn't live in Alexandria. They just didn't fit in. I led up to that a little bit in #75 where Michonne knocks Rick out after he'd gotten into that fight with Pete. I thought it would be cool to show that Rick had kind of preserved the humanity of everybody else in his group to a certain extent.

So that Glen and Maggie and some of the others were like, "Oh, I like Alexandria. I can totally live here," but Rick and Michonne and Carl were just completely unable to trust these people and completely unable to relax and exist in this community. So I was gonna have them leave and live on their own in the wild for a while. The book was just gonna follow those three characters for a number of issues before something would happen and they would come back to the community.

And then I thought it would be kind of cool to come back to the community after a while, see different things that had happened and different things that had changed before it got back into

setting up things for Negan and "All Out War" stuff that we're getting into now. At the end of the day I just decided that it wasn't really a necessary detour. As cool as I thought the ideas were and how neat I thought a few of the issues would have been, I felt like their journey, getting Rick with Andrea and leading up to the things that I'm doing now, is a little bit more important than taking that detour.

**Eric:** Have you ever gotten a pretty good chunk into an issue and said, "This isn't working, I'm shifting gears and doing something else?"

**Robert:** No, usually I know where I'm going by the time I'm actually typing script. I always plot things on paper with a pencil before I type the script. So I always have very extensive notes of what happens on every page. I've got a pretty clear roadmap when I go to write my script. In that stage, I have replotted issues before, or replotted like half issues or so after plotting them out. I've been like, "Oh, it doesn't have enough punch," or "Oh, shit, I forgot, I need to be at this point by the end of this issue or else I'm not gonna be able to do this two issues later." So I'll tuck in things or cut things or move things around as they're needed. So a lot of that kind of stuff happens in the plot stage. By the time I'm writing scripts, I'm basically just transcribing the story as it's been laid out. But I have thrown out entire issues of plots before.

**Eric:** Now we haven't really talked about Charlie at all. But at this point Charlie has been drawing the book for 109 issues.

**Robert:** Yeah, since #7.

**Eric:** I worked with Charlie back in the nineties. I've known him for a long time. But his work on the book and the way he's grown as an artist has been pretty remarkable to me. I mean obviously he's been around this entire time so you have to love working with him, right?

**Robert:** No, actually I hate him. But no, [laughter], he's great. I mean Charlie really is the guy who's brought this world to life. Tony (Moore) did the first six



issues and Tony was a friend of mine. I met him in the seventh grade and we kind of came up in comics together. We did *Battle Pope*. We did things like *Brit* and other things leading up to *The Walking Dead*. Tony's just not a monthly guy and I kind of knew that when I started *The Walking Dead*, but it really started going off the rails very early on.

Once it became clear that Tony wasn't gonna be able to keep up the monthly deadlines and just deliver the long-form year upon year upon year storyline that I was setting out to do, I needed to bring somebody in. Charlie was somebody that I've been circling for a long time and someone who I've been a fan of his art on things like *Astronauts in Trouble* and *The X-Files* comic that he did at Topps, and the various comics that he did at Marvel and DC. He kind of tended to bounce around on those books. He didn't really have a long run on any one series at Marvel or DC. But I was always aware of his stuff and I thought that he had a really cool book in him that he'd be able to do for a long time.

When he agreed to do the book, I was ecstatic just because his art style was so interesting. It was really different from what Tony was doing at the time. But to me, especially looking back, the shading and the mood and the starkness of it, it made the world seem more bleak. It made the world seem more deadly.

I like to say that Tony's zombies look like really cool monsters from a monster movie. They were very threatening and very terrifying and awesome. The guy draws like the best zombies in the business. But for *The Walking Dead*, Charlie's zombies look like people, and they look pitiful and they look sad. I think that's something that plays more to *The Walking Dead*.

When you see a Charlie Adlard zombie, you can see a level of sorrow on their face. They tend to be a little relatable and you can kind of picture what they've gone through to get them to this point. It's that actual level that he brought to the book that I really think brought it to the heights that it's reached and really kind

of solidified the look of it and the world. And really kind of made it what it is.



Eric: Yeah, it's funny because as much as I enjoyed Tony's work on the book and as much as I've enjoyed stuff he's done since, Charlie really does have an extra something that he brings to the stuff. Also, he's a machine. There aren't a lot of artists in comics these days who can say they're drawn 109 issues of a comic book. I mean actually, it's like him and Mark Bagley, I guess.

Robert: Erik Larsen. Yeah, there's some guys floating around. For *The Walking Dead* to be *The Walking Dead*, there's a lot of story to tell there. I think if we were sitting here ten years later on #40 or #50... and there are books like *Hellboy* and other series that have been around longer that have fewer issues out.

Eric: *Hellboy* has been around for 20 years. That book has been around twice as long as *The Walking Dead* and there aren't even half as many issues.

Robert: Yeah, I mean that's an epic story. Honestly, it's better than *The Walking Dead* in almost every way, so I don't want to seem like I'm comparing it to *Hellboy* in any kind of negative way, but I just don't feel like my story would work or be as cool if we weren't putting the book out 12 issues a year and we weren't telling these long, expansive stories. I got to this book do for 60 years instead of 30 years? That would be upsetting to me. I don't have 60 years in me, come on.





**Eric:** [laughter] You just started this thing where you're going to be doing two issues a month, and you've got Stefano Gaudiano inking Charlie and you sent over Charlie's pencils for the issue. To me, that was a real revelation because Charlie's pencils are almost better than his finished work.

**Robert:** *There's a softness to them and there's a depth to them that I definitely think just working in pencil he is able to bring different things to the page. It's really cool just how different some of that art looks when he's just penciling. I think it's turning out really great.*

**Eric:** Stefano's inks have been really cool, too. There are certain things where I look at it and I'm like, "Wow, that is totally different from the way Charlie does that." But it's also totally cool.

**Robert:** *He's okay. But no, all joking aside, you know, Stefano's really bringing a new look to the book. But I don't mean it's changing things in a way that it'll actually be jarring. I just think it's adding a new flavor, a new element. But I feel like it's additive. It's not different as much as it is extra. I know the people are*



*really gonna respond well to the art in this arc.*

**Eric:** Yeah, I don't think it's that much different at all either. There's actually probably a lot of people who are like, "What? I don't see any difference at all."

**Robert:** [laughter] Sure.

**Eric:** When you introduce a character into the book, do you tell Charlie what you want the guy to look like in terms of like a design? Or does the guy shows up on the page?

**Robert:** *No, I usually give him a sense. Thought I don't have any recollection of giving him any direction on the Governor in particular. I think I may have said that he would have a mustache, but I'm pretty sure that the look of the Governor was just Charlie. But for a character like Negan, I gave him specifics on what I wanted him to look like. I gave him an actor who I will not name, just in case that guy later wants to be cast in the show and we can't. That could be problematic.*

*I sent Charlie some photos of George*



*Clinton because I thought that George Clinton is a pretty interesting character. So I wanted to kind of bring that kind of eclectic character into the book.*

*Eric: He is theatrical looking.*

*Robert: Yeah, yeah, definitely. That's what I was going for with the Ezekiel character, but for Jesus I was like, "He's got hair and beard or whatever." But you know, Charlie adds a great deal to things and definitely brings a cool flavor to all the characters that keeps it really consistent.*



*Eric: Is there anything you've done on the book at any point over the last ten years that you've regretted?*

*Robert: I regret cutting Rick's hand off. I mean I do and I don't. I don't because I like that it was a decision that I made that I had to live with. I like that it was very unexpected and I like that it set up the Governor in a very cool way and really kind of showed him, right out of the gate, as being sadistic and everything. I think that all worked out pretty great. I don't like that it's a giant pain in the ass.*

*I'm constantly having to rewrite scenes because I'll forget. I'll write that Rick puts on a shirt, which you can do with one hand but I'm picturing him with two hands. Or Rick will lift up something that he can't really lift with one hand. In #51, I wrote a scene of Rick opening a can with a can opener. And I was like, "Yeah, that's a two-handed operation, buddy. That's not gonna fuckin' work." So I had to rewrite that scene so that he handed it to Carl and has Carl open it. But that shows how pathetic Rick is after having lost the prison and it actually adds to the scene. So I shouldn't say that I regret it. But I will say that it is a pain in the ass.*

*Eric: Charlie has told me, too, and I think you mentioned it, that he will also frequently draw the wrong hand chopped off. Like the stump will be in the wrong place or sometimes he will just draw both hands.*



*Robert: Yeah, we've had to flip hands a few times. We've had to have him redraw panels a few times. He'll draw Rick with two hands. He'll draw the stump on the right side. Sometimes Cliff (Rathburn) has to fix it. Sometimes Charlie will have*



to redraw it. Charlie actually hasn't made that goof in a while. Either that or I'm not catching them anymore. I know it has made it to print a couple of times, but yeah, that's a hard one to keep track of. Every now and then Charlie slips up and draws a hand which is silly because it's really just more work for him. You would think that he would key into the fact that it's less drawing and he would remember. But the guy's a hard worker.

Eric: So with ten years under your belt at this point, and I know you always say that you want to write the book as long as you have ideas for it, and you would be happy writing it for the rest of your life, but looking forward, where do you want to see the book in the next ten years?

Robert: Well, my goal right now is for the book to outlive the show. That's the thing that really excites me. The show is really cool. I love working on the show. I don't want the show to ever end. But I really like the idea of the show running its course, coming up with a very cool, satisfactory ending for the show, and then the comic continuing to tell stories and continuing to dig deeper in this world and move forward. I think that would be a really fun place to get to. The show is doing really well so that might take a while. Maybe the show will outlive the comic and that'll be annoying.

But I see it going for a good long while. Interestingly enough, I know how the book ends. I've always had a rough idea of how the book wraps up. But I've come up with the scenes that I think together actually ends the series. I'm really excited about getting to those. So I'm not going to speed things up at all, but now that I have the ending mapped out, it helps me tell more stories and gives me a better idea of what's going on in the book and what's gonna continue to go on in the book for years to come.

But I have to never tell anyone about that ending because if anyone on the TV show finds out what that ending is, they might put it in the TV show before it appears in the comic and that would be extremely frustrating to me. So that's a fun game that I have to play. I'm going to be in the writer's room on the final season of the show and it'll be like, "So how do we end this?" And

I'm gonna go, "Uh, I don't know." And then as they're coming up with ideas, I'm gonna have to be like, "No, no, not bad, that's a great idea, but it's like this unspoken ending that I have for the comic that I can't tell you about."

You have to not do that. That's gonna be somewhat awkward, but it'll be worth it in the end. So that's gonna be pretty exciting. I think about the end now and maybe it'll be #360 or maybe it'll be #500, but there's an end in sight to a certain extent, which I don't want to scare people because I do think this book will go for a good long time.

Eric: I don't think it scares people. I think knowing that whoever's writing the story has an endpoint in mind, actually gives readers more confidence that they're not just being led down the garden path every month.

Robert: I don't want anyone to think that I'm just spinning my wheels. There's definitely an end in sight. It's just many, many years away. But yeah, I'll hopefully be rambling on in an interview with you ten years from now in our 20th anniversary special where we reprint the second issue in full color. So I'll look forward to that.

Eric: Well, I tell you, it's been a pretty awesome ten years. I always tell people that one of my favorite parts of this job is being able to read really cool books before anybody else sees them. It's kind of like having a backstage pass. It's been pretty awesome watching how the book has developed over this time.

Robert: Hopefully I won't let you down in the near future.

Eric: So far there hasn't been any hint that that would be a problem.

Robert: I'll do my best.





# THE WALKING DEAD™

.com

NEWS  
INTERVIEWS  
SNEAK PEEKS  
CONTESTS  
BEHIND THE SCENES INFO  
CHARACTER BIOS  
STORY COVERAGE  
MERCHANDISE

IMAGECOMICS.COM

RATED **M** / MATURE

©2013 TM Robert Kirkman, LLC, and/or Skybound, LLC All Rights Reserved.

SKYBOUND